

FRAMING THE ISSUE: COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

By

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To Catherine

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FRAMING THE ISSUE: COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

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Cooperative conservation originated as a federal program in August 2004 with the signing of Executive Order 13,352 making five federal entities responsible for promoting and engaging in partnership efforts under the concept of cooperative conservation. The Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Defense, Commerce, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were all ordered to include local participation in federal decision making, in keeping with their organizational missions. Advocated as a way to promote partnerships and avoid conflict, the purpose was to engage nonfederal and federal partners in conservation efforts and decision making.

Given national recognition with President George Bush as its highest-level advocate, cabinet members and their designees set out to engage partners in cooperative conservation across the nation. This research examined how the cooperative conservation message was framed over a four-year period by the federal organizations responsible for following the executive order in their news releases, and to determine if consistency of frames existed among them. It also explored how their nonfederal partners framed cooperative conservation to determine if federal entities and their partners framed cooperative conservation in the same way.

Last, the research explored cooperative conservation frames in the print news media, and looked for links between news releases on cooperative conservation and published news stories.

What the research revealed was that frame consistency about cooperative conservation existed over time among the federal organizations named in E.O. 13,352. Among federal organizations the frames were success, money, responsibility, and cooperative conservation as a tool. Nonfederal partners employed the cooperative conservation frames of natural resources, money, and exceptional examples. Common frames were shared in federal and nonfederal news releases: money and shining examples. News stories over time also revealed consistency in cooperative conservation frames, with the overall frames being money, responsibility, success, and conflict. Placement in newspapers framed cooperative conservation as “news” and often included the local aspect of national or regional stories. The content of only a few news releases were found in a limited number of news stories, with the primary connection being direct quotes from issued press releases.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation is defined as “the preservation, management, and care of natural and cultural resources,” and cooperation as “the act of working or acting together to achieve a common goal” (Encarta Dictionary, 2007). CooperativeConservation.gov (2009) defines cooperative conservation as “the efforts of landowners, communities, citizens, conservation groups, industry, and governmental agencies who join together to conserve our environment.”

The site goes further to state that:

through cooperative conservation, citizens from every walk of life enhance, restore and protect lands, waters, air and wildlife resources on public and private lands. Through cooperative conservation, citizens play a central and substantive role in the stewardship and governance of the environments in which they live, work and play.

—*CooperativeConservation.gov*

This sounds simple, yet in reality cooperatively working on conservation issues has sometimes been not merely elusive but actually a contentious proposition. The relationships or lack thereof, affect communities and areas both large and small. One example of that elusiveness, which also highlights the sensitive reality of conservation efforts, is a July 2007 lawsuit filed by environmental groups against the U.S. Forest Service over its plan to log about 18 square miles of land near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, part of the Superior National Forest in Minnesota at the U.S. border with Canada. The Forest Service plan included clearcuts, partial cuts and thinning of trees on approximately 12,000 acres in a corridor between two large sections of wilderness (Meersman, 2007).

A different perspective comes from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Moyer, 2007), in an article that describes an “ideological war over wildlife” affecting a small community in Kettle Creek Valley, Pennsylvania, that is pitting the community against conservation. What is the war about? State restrictions on the annual timber rattlesnake roundup that raises funds for the local

volunteer fire department. Timber rattlers are considered a candidate for Pennsylvania's list of threatened and endangered species because "habitat destruction, wanton killing and collecting for the pet trade have confined the reptile to the most remote mountainous regions" (Moyer, 2007). A Kettle Creek Valley businessman, Dave Cardellino, expressed concern about state interference and imposed decisions: "It's kind of a shame when the state comes into small communities like this and regulates things" (Moyer, 2007).

It is not just the protection of imperiled or potentially threatened species, scenic lands, or individual rights that sit at the heart of conservation battles. It is also about money. With 183 invasive species inhabiting North America's Great Lakes, the state of Michigan passed legislation that took effect in 2007, requiring freighters to sterilize ballast water before discharging it into its waters (National Sea Grant Law Center, 2005). "State legislators say they grew tired of waiting for the industry and federal regulators to slam the door on invasives, a threat to the ecosystem and a huge drain on the regional economy" reads an April 2007 *Associated Press* story (Flesher, 2007). The result: Michigan is being sued by a shipping coalition claiming the law makes unreasonable demands and restrains interstate commerce, which violates the U.S. Constitution (Flesher, 2007). According to Flesher's article, the Great Lakes' states feel the federal government is not doing enough to protect against invasive species, which would explain why Wisconsin (Wisconsin Assembly Bill, 2007) and Minnesota (Minnesota House of Representatives, 2005-2006) have similar legislation in the pipeline. This is not just about states' rights to regulate, but also about the economics of conservation:

Damage from zebra and quagga mussels, which clog municipal water intake pipes, exceeds \$150 million a year. The region's \$4 billion fishery suffers from competitive outsiders such as the round goby and a recently arrived virus blamed for fish kills in Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron.

—Flesher, *Lawsuit Opens a New Front in Battle over Great Lakes*

Ultimately, the decision to engage in cooperative conservation in this way was that of President George W. Bush. According to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne (2006), appointed by Bush, speaking at a Cooperative Conservation listening session in Brewer, Maine, Bush's reasons were these:

The President understands the importance of working closely with local partners, and he said, and I quote, we believe that cooperative conservation is the best way to protect the environment. This means that we must focus on the needs of states and respect the unique knowledge of local authorities and welcome the help of private groups and volunteers. He also said that through cooperative conservation, we're moving away from the old environmental debates that pit one group against another and towards a system that brings citizens of every level of government together to get results.

—Kempthorne (2006, September 20), *Transcript of cooperative Conservation Listening Session Brewer, Maine*

### **Dealing with Conflict**

Other alternatives to addressing environmental conflict exist in the form of organizations and programs such as the federal U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, the private CONCUR, Inc., which provides “agreement-focused mediation and facilitation, joint fact-finding, conflict assessment, environmental policy analysis, strategic planning, and training” (CONCUR, Inc., 2009), and George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis & Resolution which offers graduate certificates in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaboration (George Mason University, 2009). In 1995, Trauger, Tilt and Hatcher wrote about the need to find new ways to conduct business based on expanded mandates and decreased budget (p. 114). Serving as an alternative venue to lawsuits, feelings of powerlessness, or excluding local populations seems to be a core principle of *Executive Order 13,352: Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation* (2004). Cooperative Conservation is described on the joint federal cooperative conservation website as “the steadfast and increasing commitment of Americans to play a central and substantive role in stewardship and governance of the environments in which

they live, work, and play” (CooperativeConservation.gov, 2007). According to the website, this federal initiative is designed to ensure that the:

Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency implement laws relating to environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in Federal decisionmaking, in accordance with their respective agency missions, policies, and regulations.

—*CooperativeConservation.gov*

This supports what White and Bourne (2006, p. 588) consider common knowledge, “that public policy development requires both an appreciation of public values and an ability to involve insights from local people.” Citizens want inclusion in the decision-making process. Tuler and Webler, writing in *Park Science*, begin their article with the statement: “Government agencies are under increasing pressure to conduct policy planning and decision making activities in more transparent and inclusive ways. The clear trend is toward broader and more frequent public involvement and collaboration” (2000, p. 24). In national parks, promoting participation may “assist in reaching mandated goals, reduce legal challenges, enhance legitimacy and trust,” reducing costs and conflicts (Tuler & Webler, p. 24).

Thus, on a national scale, cooperative conservation supports what some citizens are already doing. One such example is community forestry exemplified by the nonprofit group known as the Blackfoot Challenge profiled by Jim Robbins in *The New York Times* (2005). An association of ranchers, conservationists, and other locals dependent upon the land in Montana’s Blackfoot Valley, joined together to buy land being sold by the Plum Creek Timber Company. This resulted in “a complex land deal involving federal land agencies, ranchers, and other private owners with strict easements,” that, combined with other easements, will leave over 100,000 acres undeveloped, including 5,400 acres owned by the Blackfoot Challenge (Robbins, 2007).

Robbins goes on to state that community forestry “recognizes that community members have a stake in what happens around them and gives the different interest groups a voice in management” (p. 21).

Cooperative conservation appears to incorporate that philosophy into its model, which allows for variation between ecosystems and stakeholders (Exec. Order No 13352, 2004). Regardless of what it is called, working cooperatively, collaboratively, or in partnership with local, state, federal, or non-governmental organizations is hardly new. A 1919 note in the journal *Science* entitled, “Cooperative conservation of the Indiana-Lake Michigan Sand Dunes” shows that disagreements over land use by governments and private groups have been occurring for decades. “For some time a quiet agitation for the setting aside of this local unique region abounding in rare and valuable flora and fauna specimens” led to a standoff between the parties (*Science*, 1919, p. 406). The note describes the “new spirit of cooperation” that was ultimately brokered between an ex-state senator, and the Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce, thanks to the creation of a general committee, a legal committee, and a boundary committee for the “attainment of the objectives which have hitherto be considered antagonistic” (*Science*, p. 406). The preservation of the land was largely fought by the residents of Porter County, and the combination of misunderstandings, antagonism, and competing interests was ultimately concluded through mediation and consensus.

Ninety years later, the same things are occurring, and scientists are voicing support for cooperative conservation efforts that involve local as well as government stakeholders. “Successful efforts [in cooperative conservation] require vertical integration, from local levels through to state, federal, and tribal levels” (Klinger & Dale, 2007). This is not to say that partnerships or cooperative conservation is a panacea for all environmental problems, issues, or

questions (Trauger et al., 115). But it is a shift in thinking and acting from the historic top-down process to one that combines the bottom-up input of local citizens who are landowners, ranchers, and neighbors, or other stakeholders (Klinger & Dale, p. 97; Cortner & Moote, 2000; Gold, 2007).

In 1986, Glynn wrote that the educational level of the general population precluded many people from fully understanding scientific issues let alone becoming engaged in science policy decision making (p. 55). In the last 20 years though, more people are taking that step into the realm of science and environmental policy as stakeholders. Klinger and Dale (2007), and Sherman (2007) assert that coalition building, and treating partners such as tribes as true partners, is needed for cooperative conservation success. It will not eliminate conflicts but will change the manner in which they are resolved. Glicken (p. 300) describes creating coalitions, building consensus, and compromising as processes that have been building since the 1970s, and which move interactions away from paternalistic approaches by governments or decision makers, where some citizens were invited to participate in a process based on government terms and needs. Another model Glicken illustrates is that of confrontation or conflict, which, at the extreme, includes litigation. Instead one can use contributory public participation, which would lead to better decisions based on including the public as an information provider (Glicken, p. 303).

### **Cooperative Conservation in the News**

In the media “cooperative conservation” has been a topic since at least the year 2000, when then-presidential candidate George W. Bush framed it as part of his “simple philosophy” in an *Audubon Magazine* interview with David Seidman (2000):

Conservation must begin with conversation. I believe we must build cooperative conservation partnerships among federal and state governments, local communities, and



private landowners. The White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, for example, is a model of success that balances conservation efforts with a sound multi-use policy. The Clinton-Gore Administration's top-down approach ignores successful local efforts like this one.

—George Bush, in Seidman *,Face-off! Al Gore and George Bush on Environmental Issues*

Bush framed the issue in a way that defined the problem in the political, economic, and collaborative governance realms of environmental conservation efforts. He set the tone by identifying the problem and a potential solution on the national political stage, but how would it be framed based on that definition, or the definitions of others? This is a vital question because how a person defines a problem affects the way he or she analyzes it (Morris, 2005) in an attempt to solve it. Partnerships and collaborations on a range of environmental issues and involving a variety of federal, state, and nongovernmental partners have been taking place for decades, but this type of relationship was given a higher profile with presidential attention and support through an executive order in 2004.

It is important to emphasize that cooperative conservation is not limited to efforts to save forests or individual species. It is also a management approach to addressing shifts and increases in human populations, and environmental conditions as well. For example, the population of Sacramento County, California, is expected to grow by one million people by 2026, and repeated flooding in the Northern Plains of the United States has required long-term planning and the development of partnerships to address these system changes (O'Leary, Gerard, & Bingham, 2006).

Cooperative conservation is an example of a long-term government program to get citizens involved in the decision making and management of their local environments and natural resources. Federal agencies have used a number of tools to better communicate to the American

public about nonsource point pollution (Lisboa Inc., 2001), the management of a national marine sanctuary in Georgia (Shortland, Sullivan & Fangman, 2007), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (2007) is involved in efforts to provide conservation planning and technical assistance to clients such as individuals, groups, and units of government.

The Council on Environmental Quality is responsible for guiding the federal cooperative conservation effort that involves four federal Departments and their bureaus, and one independent agency. It is not just warm and fuzzy feel-good public relations; it is an ongoing effort on multiple scales and locations that allocates numerous federal, state, and municipal employees, tribes, and volunteer organizations' resources--fiscal, human, and material.

### **Purpose and Objectives of this Study**

This research will examine media and organizations' framing of cooperative conservation, which is also described as collaborative or partnership efforts in environmental conservation. Newspaper articles and press releases issued by federal and nongovernmental organizations engaged in collaborative conservation efforts will be explored using frame analysis to identify the frames presented and their functions based on Entman's 1993 descriptions, and to compare the consistency among them. Investigating media framing of cooperative conservation will reveal the communications convergence of citizens, nongovernmental organizations, and government entities that have often conflicting and overlapping goals in the environmental arena.

News release and news media frames and framing techniques of cooperative conservation will be examined for the time frame of the signing of the authorizing executive order in 2004 through January 20, 2009. This will provide a snapshot of the combined efforts of public and private resources (fiscal, intellectual, and labor) in working toward conservation goals. Framing cooperative environmental efforts is the converse of looking at media framing of events such as

Hurricane Katrina in 2005, September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, or the shooting of students at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 2007. Why? Because instead of examining media framing of a natural hazard, crisis, or emergency and its aftermath, it looks at framing of ongoing routine efforts of governments and nongovernmental entities to meet the needs of the public. This moves research away from crises, polarizing conflicts and political campaigns as a typical element of media study. Instead, this research study looks at communications by and about the bureaucracy, which is defined by Lane (2000) as government activity and its consequences. News stories may be considered responses to what Tuchman (1991) calls the general American query of “what’s new?” This research asks if the bureaucratic efforts focused on the environmental cooperative conservation is newsworthy.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

*This country was founded on a belief that citizens should be involved in decisions affecting their lives.” —Gericke, Sullivan, & Wellman (1992)*

### **Cooperative Conservation**

Cooperative conservation is not supposed to be just a catchy presidential marketing slogan, but an approach to managing, protecting, understanding, and conserving the nation’s natural resources in ways that include local citizens and state, tribal and national partners, including nongovernmental organizations. Since 1890, the National Weather Service has used volunteers to collect rainfall data, and the U.S. Geological Survey collaborates with individuals, groups, and other agencies to monitor amphibians across the nation (National Weather Service, 2007; U.S. Geological Survey, 2007). Deborah Gangloff, executive director of the American Forests states that her organization has been engaged in cooperative conservation for 130 years (2005). American Forests is the nation’s oldest nonprofit citizens’ conservation organization, and according to its Website, its vision is to have healthy forest ecosystems for every community (American Forests, 2007). Work that supports that vision includes a list of cooperative projects, such as the Nez Perce tribe reforesting lands along the Clearwater River, Idaho, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Forest Service, and Coleman Natural Foods (Gangloff, 2005, p 111). “National forests provide opportunities for recreation in open spaces and natural environments. With more and more people living in urban areas, national forests are becoming more important and valuable to Americans” (U.S. Forest Service, 2007a).

The Western Governors’ Association helped coordinate efforts with private land owners to protect the large chicken-like sage grouse across 11 states because of their declining

populations (Cooper, 2005). “Sage grouse inhabit a complex sagebrush ecosystem, which is home to multiple species of concern” (Western Governors’ Association, 2007). According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the sage grouse were facing loss, fragmentation, and degradation of their habitat due to wildfire, invasion of non-native plants, livestock management, agricultural conversion, herbicide treatment, and mining and energy development, among other causes (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2004). This was not just a public relations move, but also a mechanism for governors to defray a portion of the costs associated with implementing the Endangered Species Act (Cooper, p. 512; Hoffman, Riley, Troast & Bazerman, 2002). Cooperative conservation is not cheap. In the 2004 fiscal year, private partners to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Joint Venture Program provided \$318 million in funding in addition to the approximately \$175 million in federal cooperative conservation funds budgeted to federal agencies (Cohn, 2005). It is more than just dollars and cents in the management and collaboration scenario, it is land and water relied upon by plants, animals, and people. The people want a voice in the plans and actions that will affect their environment.

Why does input from citizens matter? Because, on both a small and large scale, it can improve management decisions, improve the image of the agency, or simply enlighten citizens (Curtis & Hauber, 1997). Rockloff and Moore (2006) write that effective public participation is generally essential in successful environmental management because many natural resources are managed by governments on behalf of the public, or their successful management requires actions across tenures both public and private. The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages about 500 million acres of surface land, 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf (Gulf of Mexico), and 348 reservoirs providing irrigation for farmers and water for 31 million people (Department of the Interior, 2007). The National Forest Service (FS) deals with over 190 million

acres of forests and grassland (U.S. Forest Service, 2007b), and the Department of Defense (DoD) manages 25 million acres of land in the United States (Cleanwater.gov, 2007). In national parks, Tuler and Webler (2000) assert that public participation is instrumental in that it helps parks achieve mandates and goals as well as reducing legal challenges, costs, and conflicts while enhancing legitimacy and trust.

When engaging the public it is essential to recognize that: “people are not empty vessels waiting to be filled up with scientific facts. They already possess existing idea frameworks and dispositions that need to be taken into account,” (Wooden, 2003, p. 159). A common term for someone with an investment in an issue is “stakeholder.” In cooperative conservation, conservation partnerships, or collaborative environmental efforts that person is anyone [or any group] who benefits from the human-wildlife interactions, and those for whom such interactions yield problems (Riley, Decker, Carpenter, Organ, Siemer, Mattfield et al., 2002). Communications consultant Jessica Glicken (1999, p.298) describes stakeholders as those people or groups who can affect or will be affected by a public decision. Leach, Pelkey and Sabatier (2002) define stakeholder partnerships as consisting of representatives from private interest groups, local public agencies, and state or federal agencies, who converse as a group, periodically and indefinitely to discuss or negotiate public policy within a broadly defined issue area. Communications scholars Miller and Riechert (2001, p. 110) use a definition from Lyons, Scheb and Richardson that refers to stakeholders as “individuals or groups in the policymaking process that ‘stand to win or lose as a result of a policy decision.’”

The Federal Cooperative Conservation Website (2007) provides no definition of a stakeholder, but provides this description of a stakeholder in the context of cooperative conservation:

as the efforts of landowners, communities, conservation groups, industry, and governmental agencies who join together to conserve our environment. Through cooperative conservation, citizens from every walk of life enhance, restore, and protect lands, waters, air, and wildlife resources on public and private lands. Through cooperative conservation, citizens play a central and substantive role in the stewardship and governance of the environments in which they live, work, and play.

—*Federal Cooperative Conservation Website*

One example of how a partnership or cooperative effort works is provided by Seth Mott, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) national coordinator for Joint Venture Programs. Mott was quoted in Cohn (2005, p. 824) as saying: “We represent a way to get different groups to work together to raise money and pool their conservation resources. We harness the conservation capacity [of our partners] and direct it toward high-priority needs of birds in a coordinated fashion.” Joint ventures entail partnerships among federal agencies from the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as state wildlife agencies, corporations, business associations, private individuals, environmental and wildlife groups (Cohn, p. 824). Partnerships can involve a wide variety of partners across small or large geographic areas. In a 2005 essay, Mike Johanns Secretary of the Department of Agriculture from June 2005 through September 2007, wrote that he “learned that cooperative conservation [involves work] with neighbors and townsfolk, with anyone who shares the landscape upon which we depend to make a living. It is about respect for each other and finding common goals.” It sounds like good program marketing, and makes a good quote, but is there more to the story? How did cooperative cooperation become a part of the national agenda?

### **What is an Executive Order?**

Created by a 2004 executive order (E.O.), the federal push for cooperative conservation is one of a long line of presidential executive orders. Some orders created sweeping societal changes from interring Japanese-Americans during World War II (E.O. 9,066), integrating the

U.S. Armed Forces in 1961 (E.O. 9,981), and establishing the Peace Corps (E.O. 10,924), to creating the Department of Homeland Security in 2001 (E.O. 13,228). First used in 1793 by George Washington to declare America's neutrality in the war between England and France (Deering & Maltzman, 1999), this constitutionally granted power provides presidents an alternative to federal legislation to pursue and efficiently implement their policy goals (Krause & Cohen, in Deering & Maltzman). Scholars consider executive orders to be a tool for making significant policy changes (Mayer, 1999; Cooper, 2001).

According to Mayer (1999), presidents use executive orders to avoid interference from the courts or the U.S. Congress, and to emphasize important symbolic positions. Following the model of Theodore Roosevelt's "bully pulpit," presidents can use executive orders to selectively mobilize and demobilize political interest and introduce new legislative preferences (Whittington & Carpenter, 2003; Marshall & Pacelle, 2005). Typically, legislative proposals from the White House are "attached to larger political efforts . . . which can mobilize public support for the president's own favored issues" (Whittington & Carpenter, 2003, p. 501). Though scholars debate the role of executive orders in the face of a friendly or hostile Congress, the reality is they are used to deal with issues both foreign and domestic (Wigton, 1996; Whittington & Carpenter, 2003; Cooper 2001; Marshall & Pacelle, 2005), and on the domestic front, environmental conservation is one of these issues.

An important focus of the cooperative conservation E.O. is that it instructs the federal entities named to engage in shared governance and management of national resources: (:

The term "cooperative conservation" means actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

—*Exec. Order No. 13,352*



Such collaboration, according to U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (2004), is:

understood by most to be a system of decision-making in which people and groups from opposing sides work together to formulate a plan of action that is acceptable to all involved. Incorporating cooperation and a willingness to assist all parties in achieving their objectives, collaboration forms the basis of principled decision-making and provides a stable framework for a republican government.

—Crapo, *Collaboration as a means to formulating mutually beneficial environmental policy*

Coggins (1999) and Lubell (2004a) ask if the cooperative effort is real or just an ideological fad. Lubell sees promise. Coggins, though, argues that devolving decision-making down to local groups, though not new, is simply a method of passing the buck, of abdicating responsibility. He also sees it as a threat to “important elements of federal procedural law” (p. 608). Nonetheless, cooperative efforts in decision-making and execution have moved forward in the last decade.

The Executive Order not only impacts the federal organizations named but encourages participation of current or potential partners whose missions correspond to the environmental efforts of the federal organizations. There are a variety of partners, partnerships and coalitions engaged in environmental issues, and this research will focus on eleven organizations and projects identified on the Cooperative Conservation America Website (2009).

The nongovernmental organizations were selected because of their conservation partnerships with Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Defense; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Department of Commerce). The partners are engaged in work on public and private lands, in various aquatic and terrestrial habitats representing a range in both scope and scale of the types of cooperative conservation programs currently occurring across the nation; large and small, as well as regional and local.

Although the partners listed are many, all of the organizations do not regularly and consistently produce news releases. In order to get a broader picture of the messages used it was necessary to be inclusive in the number of nongovernmental organizations incorporated in the research. Examining these organizations and projects listed below provides a manageable number of entities for review. All of the projects involve partnerships with the federal organizations listed in the executive order on cooperative conservation:

- “The heart of the American Heritage Rivers initiative is locally driven and designed solutions” (Environmental Protection Agency, 2009);
- The Sonoran Institute “promotes community decision that respect the land and the people of the West” (The Sonoran Institute, 2009) ;
- Chesapeake Bay Program- Watershed Partnership “is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners include the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and participating citizen-advisory groups,” Chesapeake Bay Program” (2009);
- Blackfoot Challenge “is a landowner-based group that coordinates management of the Blackfoot River, its tributaries, and adjacent lands. It is organized locally and known nationally as a model for preserving the rural character and natural beauty of a watershed. Although its charter dates to 1993, Blackfoot landowners have played an instrumental stewardship role since the late 1970s—bringing conservation easement legislation, walk-in hunting areas and recreation corridor management to Montana” (Blackfoot Challenge, 2009);
- Long Island Sound Study “is a cooperative effort involving researchers, regulators, user groups and other concerned organizations and individuals. These people are working together to protect and improve the health of the Sound” (Long Island Sound Study, 2009);
- The Wilderness Society’s mission is “to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places” (2009);
- The Trust for Public Land “conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come” (2009);
- The Penobscot River Restoration Trust (2009) is an unprecedented collaboration between hydropower company PPL Corporation, the Penobscot Indian Nation, seven conservation

groups, and state and federal agencies, to restore 11 species of sea-run fish to the Penobscot River, while maintaining energy production;

- Sierra Club (2009) works “to protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself. We are the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization in the United States”:
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2009) is “Non-regulatory and voluntary, locally and regionally based, driven by grassroots partners, focused on protection, restoration and enhancement in key watersheds, science based, linked nationally, sustainable and accountable”:
- NatureServe (2009) is a “network connecting science with conservation: providing the scientific basis for effective conservation, NatureServe and its network of natural heritage programs are the trusted source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems”: and
- The Nature Conservancy (2009) “protects Earth's most important natural places — for you and future generations — through great science and smart partnerships.”

### **Cooperation for the Environment**

In 1999, Jessica Glicken wrote that decision-makers in government and business are increasingly compelled to seek out citizen input in decisions that affect the public. This is not only because of legislative mandates, but also it is good business to include stakeholders. It can move local stakeholders away from perceiving that government entities are simply interfering and imposing decisions on communities, the opinion asserted by a local businessman in Kettle Creek Valley, Pennsylvania (Moyer, 2007). According to cultural anthropologist Eric Poncelet (2001a), ‘multistakeholder environmental partnerships are part of a general shift toward collaboration-based environmental management practices that have gained momentum in the industrialized West since the 1980s (p. 274). He goes on to state that current friction between environmentalists, business, and government dates back to the 1960s, the beginning of the modern conservation movement. This resistance is said to be based on “deep-rooted disagreements among competing interests in these three sectors over what constitutes the

appropriate use, care, and rights of the natural environment” (Poncelet, 2001a, p. 275). What ensues are competing, sometimes adversarial positions on issues that are local, regional, national, and international in scope. Because these competing interests have led to gridlock and polarization, policymakers and implementers are seeking more bottom-up collaboration and sharing of responsibility with diverse societal partners (Poncelet, 2001a, p. 275; EO No. 13,352, 2004).

Multi-stakeholder engagement, it turns out, is not simply a top-down bureaucratic push to avoid conflict, but one with value to citizens and scientists. In the mid 1990s, scholars wrote that the public and other stakeholders were increasingly demanding collaborative approaches to natural resource planning and management, and that resource management paradigms were shifting away from traditional multiple-use models to ecosystem-based approaches (Daniels & Walker, 1996; Behan & Gordan in Bengston, Fan & Calariers, 1999). Robert Putnam (1995), author of *Bowling Alone*, tells us that over the course of his 20-year study, Americans in the last generation have disengaged psychologically from politics and the government. However, even though Putman’s research found a general trend of civic disengagement, national environmental organizations actually grew during that same period. Hoffman et al. (2002) support this in their contention that stakeholder groups may likely perceive that they must function as protectors of the environment, a role they assume to have been abandoned by the government (p. 835).

Poncelet proposes that multi-stakeholder partnerships in the environmental arena are “more proactive in orientation and generally focused on addressing problems in situations where common environmental concerns prevail” (2001a, p. 276). His case study research on national-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration focused on social learning and change theory. He found three key results: (1) stakeholders have a willingness to learn, change, build

close friendships and trust; (2) this method encouraged innovative, out-of-the-box solutions that conventional negotiation-based problem solving did not produce; and (3) such partnerships have a capacity to encourage positive behaviors and collective identity and induce a sense of civic responsibility in participants (2001b, p. 292-293).

When Gericke, Sullivan and Wellman (1992) looked at public participation in the national forest planning process, they learned it was not cheap. Surveys were sent to 96 national forests, and 61 completed surveys were returned representing forests of all sizes across the country. Results from the data demonstrated that engaging the public was not without significant cost, such as an estimate of \$32 million for small group public meetings, phone calls and mail contacts, as well as U.S. Forest Service staff time to engage in these activities. Gericke et al. posit that the true value of public participation also includes public trust in an agency, reduction of conflicts due to public--Forest Service interaction and unrealized benefits for future planning efforts (p.38). They further state that, "Though public participation may be necessary to satisfy a public that wants to share in the decision-making process of a national forest, its effectiveness can not be assessed apart from the subsequent land management decisions" (p.38). This means that land-use decisions cannot be separated from public engagement. Inquiries into appeals filed by citizens found no correlation between public interaction and the number of appeals filed, implying that appeals may not be avoidable regardless of the amount or type of public participation. Subsequent questions raised by Gericke et al. are relevant to collaborative environmental efforts: (1) What forms of public participation are best for a given situation? (2) How much public participation is enough? (3) Where does trust in the Forest Service and the desires of the public change the planning process? (4) How does public participation influence management decisions?

Another way to look at cooperative environmental efforts is through the lens provided by Hoffman et al. (2002), who studied cognitive and institutional barriers to cooperation in EPA's Project XL, which stands for eXcellence and Leadership, and Habitat Conservation Plans with the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce. These two voluntary programs address industrial pollution control and wildlife conservation, respectively. Designed to foster collaboration between government organizations and the regulated industries, they are just two of the numerous programs intended to encourage innovation and to move thus beyond simple compliance solutions (Hoffman et al., p. 821; Environmental Protection Agency, 2007; Minerals Management Service, 2007; Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2007).

What Hoffman et al. found was that the current methods for working cooperatively were inefficient and outdated for dealing with existing environmental problems, and they were perceived as too rigid and restrictive to encourage private innovations for implementing environmentally and economically sustainable solutions (p. 820). Hoffman et al. also remind us that environmental and economic interests are both competing and complimentary (p. 822), and collaborative efforts that move toward money savings by the regulated entities could yield higher environmental protection standards than what existed at the time of their research (p. 821). These alternatives to the traditional regulator-regulated relationships aim toward negotiated compliance tailored to the needs and potentialities of individual organizations and environmental contexts (Hoffman et al., p. 821).

In courts across the United States, gridlock results in the capacity to veto environmental action that outweighs the ability to produce solutions (Poncelet, 2001b, p. 13); whereas in the European arena, there has been a call for voluntary market-driven approaches to environmental protection, and at the same time the promotion of environmental partnerships, collaborative

ventures, or stakeholder processes (Poncelet, 2001b, p. 14). The European concept is a movement away from the traditional zero-sum game (Hoffman et al, 2001; Clark, 1981) towards one with multiple winners. What Poncelet found was succinctly stated by a trade representative (2001b, p. 19): “Partnership . . . allows all the participating people to know [each other’s] standpoints. It allows us to go away from confrontation.” His review of four case studies indicated that this nonconfrontational approach might attract certain stakeholders to participate in certain partnerships, and at the very least facilitate the exchange of information on a particular environmental issue, or even encourage face-to-face communications. Yet the downside might be diligent avoidance of inherently contentious but nevertheless important issues, thus repressing debate. When Eric Poncelet (2001b) looked at collaboration and environmental partnerships using case studies from the European Union (EU), he asked: “If conflict is being carefully avoided in the EU, what are the implications for future multi-stakeholder partnerships as an environmental decision making tool?” Consequently, another negative implication for environmental partnerships might be the delegitimization of adversarial approaches to environmental action.

### **Common Management of Common Resources**

Oceans are non-excludible commons, as are endangered species in the wild, and underground water aquifers (Somma, 1997). As a result managing these common resources to avoid the ‘tragedy of the commons’ in the face of uncertainty is important to natural resource managers, and stakeholders as well. Mathematician Colin Clark (1981) described possible solutions to common property management in *Bioeconomics of the Ocean*. Marine environments are described as containing bewildering complexities, and like other common property resources, are often misused. How to manage common resources presents its own set of problems.

Clark illustrates the traditional tragedy of the commons and offers options to this in his “fisherman’s dilemma.” Similar to the prisoner’s dilemma, there are two competing exploiters with two options, conserve or deplete. The strategies the two competitors employ lead to winning through depleting the resource, which eventually leaves nothing. Instead the two can manage the common property through a cooperative solution, with each cooperating to conserve the resource and maximize the total profit (Clark, p. 232). Clark also recognizes that as well as complexity, resource managers are dealing with uncertainty, which must be included in the cooperative plan for management. In his conclusion he suggests a broader, more holistic perspective to managing ocean resources, including a range of industry and government expertise and experience from multiple fields to address conservation of the resource.

Davos, writing in the *Journal of Environmental Management* (1998, p. 379), also looked at collaboration and aquatic habitats by focusing on coastal zone management, and posed questions pertinent to any ecosystem. One need only replace the terms ‘coasts’ and ‘coastal’ with forest, wetland, rainforest, or prairie. He poses these questions (p. 379):

- Who is supposed to define the specific objectives for the coasts and their resources?
- How is the integration and harmonization of sectoral policies to be achieved and by whom?
- Whose capacity to access, assimilate and evaluate information will dictate the design and availability of the collected information and coastal environment indices?
- Will the objective of public education and citizen participation go beyond that of ‘assessing the political feasibility of certain alternatives’ and educating the ‘uninformed’ public about why the experts’ decision or proposed action is the best one?
- Who will decide which policy instrument and institutional regimes will be tested for their effectiveness, and how will this be done and by whom?

Davos points out that:

Any answers to these questions are bound to generate such conflicts that, unless they can be managed with the direct involvement of the stakeholders, will seriously undermine the latter’s willingness to co-operate and, thus, the effectiveness of CZM [coastal zone management] decisions.

—Davos, *Sustaining co-operation for coastal sustainability*



To avoid this he suggests gaining maximum support, including improving stakeholders' willingness to voluntarily cooperate in the implementation by inviting them into the process. When Leach (2006) examined collaborative democracy with groups active between 1995 and 2000 in 76 watersheds in the states of California and Washington, he used the following framework to define collaborative management as (p. 101):

a diverse group of public and private sector stakeholders who convene regularly over a period of months or years in an effort to either (1) influence and possibly to achieve consensus on public policy and its implementation, or (2) achieve quid pro quo agreements among each of the participating private and governmental parties.

—Leach, *Collaborative public management and democracy: Evidence from western watershed partnerships*

Meteorologist Rebecca Morss (2005) describes the contributions that meteorologists can make to public policy, and asserts the importance of clear problem definition, which determines potential solutions to address the problem. Like scholars who examine framing, Morss notes that an individual's problem definition affects his or her interpretation of the most important aspects of the issue and how he or she connects to it (p. 184). From coastal zones to environmental cleanup, the issues are similar. Arvai and Gregory (2003) write that problems with the U.S. Department of Energy's cleanup efforts appeared to stem from the lack of "an approach that permitted participants to think (and feel) carefully about the different pros and cons of policy options, and then once their own priorities are in order, to be involved meaningfully in the development of a recommended alternative" (p. 1469).

Senator Mike Crapo considers collaborative efforts to be a powerful mechanism for policy development in the areas of environmental regulation and land use (2004, p. 351). He provides the example of Owyhee County, Idaho, home to battles over water-use and land-use policies by environmental conservation groups, farmers, ranchers, local, state, and federal

government agencies. Rather than more court battles, the groups decided to “collaborate in creating a mutually acceptable solution in what has become known as the Owyhee Initiative” (p. 356), which came into existence in 2001. Its creation included the recommendation of an independent scientific peer-review panel to review controversial Bureau of Land Management decisions.

It is not only governors and federal managers that are calling for cooperation and collaboration on the environmental front. Schoen and Miller (2002), of the Audubon Society and National Wildlife Federation respectively, put forth an appeal for conservation alliances among agency scientists, managers, and environmentalists from nongovernmental environmental organizations (NGEO) in the matter of brown bear habitat degradation. They speak to the history of polarization, confrontation, and suspicion that has existed between NGEOS although they often have similar conservation goals. The adversarial roles are set: government agencies have the power and administrative and management authority; environmentalists advocate for conservation, but are not in a position to make policy decisions (Schoern & Miller, p. 361).

In the case of endangered grizzly bear recovery, Schoern & Miller (2002) described how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) collaborated with the National Wildlife Federation and Defenders of Wildlife and negotiated a plan for grizzly bear reintroduction to the largest unoccupied habitat south of the Canadian border, the Selway--Bitterroot Ecosystem. The plan was designed to reduce local opposition, and with the collaborative plan, the bears were to be managed by a Citizens' Management Committee (CMC), not the FWS. This committee consisted of seven representatives nominated by the Governor of Idaho, five nominated by the Governor of Montana, and one representative nominated by each of the following groups: FWS, Nez Pierce Tribe, and the U.S. Forest Service. The CMC would be selected by the Secretary of

the Interior from the nominations and would represent a cross-section of interests, viewpoints, knowledge, and experience in natural resources. Their responsibilities included recommending changes in land-use standards, and guidelines for grizzly bear management. Despite the fact that the CMC has input, the final decisions for implementation would be made by the responsible agency.

*We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.*  
French Proverb

A widespread topic in environmental collaborative, community, or partnership efforts is water. DeHaven-Smith and Wodraska (1996, p. 368) stated that “integrated resource planning needs a consensus-building component because water is typically a much more controversial issue than energy.” Energy producers, they stated, seldom make the decisions about supply combinations; in contrast, “Water production and consumption are usually bound together geographically, economically and politically” (p. 368). Their research examined consensus-building from the American Assembly model, which brings together participants representing diverse backgrounds, associations, and fields of expertise to discuss a specific policy issue. Since water was the focus of these policy decisions, they assembled representatives from all the stakeholding sectors of the Metropolitan Water District, an agency that encompasses southern California from Los Angeles to San Diego, an area, which in 1996 had 15 million inhabitants.

Not far away, on the United States-Mexico border, strained regional water infrastructure and environmental problems are being addressed cooperatively to deal with sustainable development and wastewater issues. It is a move from what was claimed to be an ineffective, secretive process to one that requires Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and North American Development Bank participation in meeting the needs of a population that is expected to grow to 24 million by 2020 (Southwest Consortium for Environmental Research &

Policy, 2005). Carter and Ortolano (2000) state that project certification by BECC requires a comprehensive community participation plan by applicants that includes local steering committee meetings with local organizations, and public access to project information.

An agreement known as *Border 2012: U.S.--Mexico Environmental Program* (U.S. EPA, 2007; Brown, 2003) also puts the focus on international cooperation, with an emphasis on local and regional agencies, state governments, and tribal governments using a bottom-up approach to address environmental and public health needs on the border region. A step further is the example of Sustainability of Semi-Arid Hydrology and Riparian Areas (2007), whose Website describes its purpose being:

to inform and support such water professionals by conducting stakeholder-relevant research, education, and knowledge transfer activities. Consequently, SAHRA has a dual mission: 1) to identify critical stakeholder-relevant knowledge gaps and conduct basin-focused multidisciplinary research to fill them; and 2) to convey what is known and what is being learned to improve water management and policy.

This organization has partnerships and collaborations with federal, state, and private entities including universities, the Audubon Society, school districts, water utilities, and United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for sharing and disseminating information.

Cooperation does not occur because someone wants it, certain skills are also required. Bingham, Nabatchi, and Leary (2005) discussed some of the skills needed by public administrators engaged in partnership efforts, such as conflict assessment, negotiation, active listening, reframing, facilitation, and consensus building. These are skills needed for collaborating with any entity, such as those revealed in Poncelet's national multistakeholder case study (2001a). He found that cooperation among multiple stakeholders does have drawbacks, and is not the answer to every environmental problem or necessarily the best choice when

presented with approaches to environmental issues. Coercive effects may occur due to economic or political influences, and personal transformations are not independent of the systems in which they occur.

Another potential drawback in collaborative efforts is missing actors. According to Glicken, “Identifying and including those groups most important to the decision maker are critical to effective public participation” (p. 307). Research on Ontario national parks revealed that problems in ecosystem management occur when stakeholders are not adequately involved in the process resulting in mistrust, miscommunication, and lack of support by or opposition from the general public (Zorn, Stephenson & Grigoriev, 2001). In 1996 Michael McClosky, then president of the Sierra Club, stated in a memo to his board of directors that the new dogma in the environmental realm is the:

proposition that the best way for the public to determine how to manage its interest in the environment is through collaboration among stakeholders, not through normal governmental processes.

Further, it proposes to do this at the community level through a consensus process.

Advocates of this notion believe collaboration must be place-based, preferably at the scale of natural units such as watersheds. This idea is being applied both to managing natural resources (national forests) and in determining allowable levels of pollution from industrial plants.

### **The Role of Citizen Groups**

Former U.S. Senator and Ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, is quoted as saying, “Citizen participation [is] a device whereby public officials induce nonpublic individuals to act in a way the officials’ desire” (2007). Cooperative environmental policy fundamentally reconfigures the roles and objectives of oversight in the regulator and regulated communities, where “regulators seek out input and participation of other parties with site-specific knowledge about the nature of the environmental problems they encounter and potentially innovative solutions to resolve them” (Bingham et al., p. 821). Such attitude and

behavioral shifts move the parties from the zero-sum battle where they may hold fast to intractable positions and inefficient regulation, to those where the hypothesis is that economic and environmental interests, though competing and complimentary, can find common ground. This includes the creation of legislation that is better for the environmental and economic interests. For this to occur it requires the input of multiple stakeholders.

In order to determine representativeness of a collaborative effort, stakeholders need to ask are any other “major organizations of classes of stakeholders not represented” (Leach, p. 102)? Leach asserts that: “In the context of collaborative management of natural resources, some of the most salient dimensions for evaluating representativeness include the relative strength of local versus national perspectives, urban versus rural perspectives, and environmental versus economic perspectives” (p. 102). What Leach found was a mixed bag using seven criteria for examining partnerships: inclusiveness, representativeness, impartiality, transparency, deliberativeness, lawfulness, and empowerment to assess the democratic merits of collaborative watershed management in the states of California and Washington. His results suggest watershed partnerships are doing well in the area of deliberativeness, with the majority of the partnerships employing “some form of joint fact finding or formal efforts to educate their participants” (p.108). It was also discovered that a majority of stakeholders had some doubts about the ability of other participants to make commitments on behalf of their respective organizations (p. 108). Of all the findings the weakest was representativeness of critical interests, meaning that anyone at the bargaining table must have the power or influence to speak and act on behalf of their organization, otherwise credibility and confidence in the cooperative process is eroded.

A different hazard that may occur if newly powerful activists consider themselves peripheral rather than central to the negotiation process is that they may resort to disruption rather than engaging in the collaborative process (Hoffman et al., 835). In 1975 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the mission blue butterfly as an endangered species; a local environmental group threatened legal action to halt development in the butterfly's habitat on the slope of the San Bruno Mountain, California. A later proposal by the FWS to list a second butterfly species "backed the landowner and developer into a corner." Developers made a deal with environmentalists to set aside more than 50% of the land (2,500 of the 3,500 acres) as butterfly habitat and open space in return for being allowed to develop the site (Thomas, 2001). It is more than butterflies and sage grouse, though "People have misconstrued what the stakeholder process is all about," stated a corporate official from Intel (Hoffman et al, p. 835). Expectations all around must be clear to all participants, activists, private companies, and governments.

Former speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, is often quoted as saying "all politics is local." On the subject of cooperative conservation and environmental partnerships, example after example bears out the wisdom of his statement. Citizens (i.e., stakeholders) are interested in what goes on in their own backyards. Be it grizzly bears or deer, it is also about a sense of place. Research done by Philip Goodwin (1998) asks if the local voices are heard or if locals are merely considered hired hands in participatory conservation. Based in Kent, England, the work is applicable in the United States. Goodwin found that people construct their understanding of the world based on geography, their sense of place. By allowing local participation, there is a resulting shift in power from political elites to "ordinary" people. Goodwin found different concepts existed among conservation experts, elites, and local

participants on what local participation constituted. Conservation experts appeared to simply want to educate locals in order to mobilize them to support national objectives (Goodwin, p. 486). This resulted in cases where the national initiatives did not address local concerns, and were seen as undermining the national claims of commitment to legitimate local participation.

Collaborative efforts ask local participants to seriously consider what they gain by taking part in cooperative decisionmaking and management. Salafsky et al. (2001) looked at conservation from an enterprise perspective for civic engagement, combining biodiversity conservation and economic development at community sites in Asia and the Pacific. With the hypothesis of greater economic benefits driving conservation by local communities, they conducted case studies of 37 Biodiversity Conservation Network (BCN) enterprises. These enterprises were comprised of local residents who produced goods or services, and were considered site stakeholders who had a direct effect on the biodiversity of the site.

They found that conservation occurred regardless of the number of stakeholder households receiving cash benefits or the average amount of benefits received per household. Conservation instead was associated with high levels of non-cash benefits, the implication being that although cash was not that important to stakeholders, they do need to some incentives to take action (Salafsky et al., p. 1591). Non-cash benefits appeared effective in the promotion of trust and cooperation between key stakeholders and project staff.

Closer to home, is the grassroots-level research by Mark Lubell (2004b), who interviewed Florida farmers participating in the Suwannee River Partnership. In this case, cooperation was defined as “farmer participation in partnership activities and attitudinal support for the implementation of best management practices” (2004b, p. 342). His exploration of collaborative management (CM) was based on the concept that it was designed to facilitate



consensus and cooperation among competing stakeholders at the watershed level, and its potential as a remedy to “pathologies” of the environmental legislation of the 1970’s, which led to conflicts, and unresolved environmental problems (2004b, p. 341).

Enter collaborative management as an alternative to regulation for solving environmental problems associated with nonpoint source pollution from urban and agricultural runoff, and habitat loss (2004b, p. 341). Lubell interviewed farmers to explain the rationale for their participation in the Partnership: economic return for using Best Management Practices (BMP), social capital in the form of collective action, trust development and norms of reciprocity, and social values based on the fundamental set of social values that shaped their perception of public policies. Findings indicated that cooperation requires a behavior component, and that participation is based on trust in, and reciprocity from, other framers in implementing BMPs, as well as trust in local government agencies. The expectation is that all participants will pull their weight although some freeloading is tolerated from smaller farms to get the benefit of overall cooperation. The nexus is found in the relationship with farmers, grassroots stakeholders, and local governments because the local agencies act as mediators between the local organizations and the broader governmental environment (2004b, p. 356).

One last critical obstacle to conservation coalitions is poor conservation programming. Napier, writing in the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* (1998), describes the Darby Creek watershed case study. Composed of two small streams in Central Ohio, the watershed’s value lay in its use as a recreation site and for agriculture. Farmers could make more money by selling land for housing construction rather than awaiting future monetary rewards for farming the land. The voluntary conservation program for Darby Creek emphasized information, education, technical assistance, and partial economic subsidies. Much like the example proposed by Clark,

there were ways to avoid the zero-sum game by farmers consistently using conservation production practices. Instead Napier found that farmers were using at least one soil and water conservation practice that negated the positive environmental efforts they also took part in. Those that conceived and implemented the Darby Creek Project did not recognize that the soil and conservation programs were not profitable in the short- or long-term. The farmers encouraged to participate were aware of this failing, however.

The products of working collaboratively include not only restored coastlines, cleaner waterways, or protected habitats but also messages about the level of partnership success, costs, responsibilities, and what the partnership means to the organizations. These messages are conveyed via news releases, testimonials, speeches, and websites the media and anyone curious about a program, project, or plan can explore.

### **Theory: Framing**

Framing is a way of organizing reality (Goffman, 1986), a way for society to make sense of events, and to give meaning to the meaningless. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), framing involves selection of some aspect or aspects of perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communication in order to “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation for the item described.” It is, in effect, a shortcut device people use to characterize situations, problems or adversaries (Kaufman & Smith, p. 164).

According to Entman (1992, p. 52; 2007. p 164), frames typically perform four functions for producers and consumers of information:

1. Frames define problems, identifying what the causal agent is doing, and the costs and benefits which are measured in common cultural value terms;
2. Frames diagnose causes, by identifying the forces that are creating the problems;
3. Frames make moral judgments, by evaluating causal agents and their effects; and

4. Frames suggest remedies, by offering and justifying treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects.

In a news story, one sentence may serve one or all of these functions (Entman, 1992, p. 52). Later Entman streamlined his definition of framing, stating it is a process that culls a few elements of perceived reality and assembles a narrative that highlights the connections among them to promote a particular interpretation (Entman, 2007, p. 164).

Though the *Journal of Communication* devoted an entire issue to framing in 2007, the term has multiple interpretations dependent upon the scholarly discipline. Van Gorp (2007, p.60) lists the influential publications that have used the term “framing” to define an aspect or foundation of that scholarly field: cognitive psychology, political communications, policy research, economics, communications, and sociology. Although used in many fields, the foundation of framing is to study the construction of meaning (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992, p. 385), and framing can be applied to many different types and aspects of messages (Weaver, 2007, p. 144).

How an issue, event, or situation is perceived by the information receiver depends on how it is framed. Therefore, what we know about the social world is dependent upon how we frame and interpret the cues we receive about the world (Edelman, 1993). When an issue is framed, a subset of relevant considerations may be emphasized over others, which leads the listener, reader, or viewer to focus only on these considerations rather than other equally relevant considerations when they form an opinion (Druckman, 2004). Framing theory explains the context or framework used in presenting information to an audience.

Framing is not a static process, however. “Events and experiences are framed and in turn we frame events and experiences” (Gamson et al., p. 384), and by doing this we bring ourselves completely into the process. In the article, “Media construction and the social construction of

reality,” Gamson et al. (p. 375) state that reading media means one must “decode” both text and imagery, which is an active process that includes context, social location, and prior experience by the consumer. This can lead to a very different decoding by each individual. Gamson et al. go on to state that “frame plays the same role in analyzing media that schema does in cognitive psychology”; frames are “a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols” (p. 384).

In terms of news media, framing calls attention to the perspectives of the communicators and their audiences, and how they picture topics in the news (McCombs, 2004, p. 87). When the media tells us how to think about an issue, it falls into the realm of framing (McCombs, 1992, p. 820; Edy & Meirick, 2007). This means that frames work by priming an audience through the introduction or elevation of the salience of certain aspects or ideas so they appear more important than others, and thus stimulate pre-existing schemas (Entman, 2007, p. 164; Van Gorp, p. 64).

News and the cultural interpretation of the news, and the world, is fluid. This is an important recognition as Tuchman (1978) tells us that media frames do not mirror society, but help to constitute and construct a shared reality (also Zhou & Moy, p. 82). Newsworthiness we learn is thus also fluid; the notions of what is newsworthy also changes from moment to moment (Tuchman, p. 184).

Frames are “shortcut devices people use to characterize situations, problems, or adversaries,” (Kaufman & Smith, p. 164). Reese’s perspective of frames is that they are tools, mere empty forms to be dressed and filled with “content, peripheral concepts and new events organized on the basis of the central network of concepts” (Reese, 2007, p. 150). This is not counter to Entman (1992, p. 52), who tells us that frames have four components: the creator, the frame content, the consumer, and the shared culture. Frames then come pre-filled by

communicators who make conscious or unconscious decisions or framing judgments, in deciding what to say in the text. The text, images, or sound is the content, which contains culturally relevant terms, stock phrases, or images that the consumer then processes and accepts, rejects or keeps as a negotiated version. The information consumers base his or her acceptance of the information on the shared cultural frames of the social groups to which they belong. Shared cultural frames are, according to Hall (in Van Gorp, 2007, p. 61), the primary base of knowledge, meaning, and comprehension of the world.

According to Gamson et al. (p. 388), framing works because people are not passively reading texts. The writer's text may have a preferred meaning and point of view that the reader is invited to accept. But the reader has the power to accept it whole cloth, reconstruct the dominant meaning, or reject it outright. Frames appear to be omnipresent and everlasting, as people are constantly engaged in multiple frames, and they are said to have no beginning or end (Van Gorp, p. 62). Media framing of an issue can narrow or define the discourse (Lane, J.B., 1998). The news media shapes how issues are framed, either directly or through the choice of whose messages are highlighted (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). Callaghan and Schnell (p. 187) assert that:

By selectively choosing to cover one side or both sides of an issue, putting forth their own interpretation, simplifying events or stories, or by simply allocating greater coverage to one issue over another, the media act as gatekeepers, advocates, and interpreters of political themes and information.

—Callaghan & Schnell, *Assessing the democratic debate: How the news media frame elite policy discourse*

Media frames (Gitlin, 1980; Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997) are basically unspoken and unacknowledged, but they organize the world for both journalists and to some degree the reader,

viewer, or listener. Internally there is a case to be made for frame building based on the journalistic ethic, routines, and organizational constraints (Zhou & Moy, 2007, p. 81).

According to Gamson (2003), frames exist on many levels, such as issue frames, event frames, and worldviews; also, one can have frames within frames. For example, an environmentalist frame may include a specific animal, ecosystem, or water issue, with limited overlap between and among individuals who consider themselves environmentalists but only as it applies to a specific species, ecosystem, or water issue. Another perspective is that proposed by Altheide (p. 30); instead of one overall frame in a story such as conflict or process, themes found in stories are in fact “mini-frames,” or can be conceived of as points of view or angles in a story. Therefore themes can be found flowing through multiple frames within a story.

Because the frame tells the reader what is important and what is not based on what is included, news consumers are also subject to what is called “out-of-frame activity,” which includes side stories or the exclusion of expected voices or perspectives from the media frames (Goffman, p. 201).

Frames can produce and limit meaning (Tuchman, p. 209). Limiting factors include the information that is included and excluded from the frame, individuals that are quoted or left out of the story, and placement in the news medium, which also affects salience (McCombs, 2004; Maher, 2003; Entman, 1993, p. 53), as well as if images, audio, or video segments are associated with the story. Frames can obscure some aspects of a story and highlight others, and according to Entman, a frame’s power “can be as great as that of language itself” (1993, p. 55). Thus frames can be filters if one reads only one section of a newspaper, or only stories with terms associated with fear, finances, and conflict in the headlines, or if the reader is not a fully acculturated member of the society.

According to Gitlin (p. 7), scholars of journalism should ask the following questions when examining frames:

- “What is the frame here?”
- “Why this frame and not another?”
- “What patterns are shared by the frames?”
- “What difference does the frame make for the larger world?”

Researchers employing frame analysis are able to examine the media content for the selection, organization, and presentation of information based on the themes, language, and symbols found within frames.

External factors of frame building to be considered (Zhou & Moy, p. 81) are political culture and societal values, and how they resonate with the public. There is an assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can influence how the audience understands it (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This leads to the issue of salience, or “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences,” which would lead to the audience distinguishing the information from the flotsam, discern meaning from it, and process it for further use (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Journalists use news frames to process and package a large amount of information quickly and efficiently for their audiences (Gitlin, p. 7).

Information packages allows news consumers to obtain the status of a situation based on the codes and frames provided: they also require them to read “between the lines” to get the messages that are not spelled out but are accessible to those who share a cultural interpretation (Van Gorp, p. 65). For example, by referring to something as another “Watergate”, “Kent State” or “Hurricane Katrina,” it evokes a powerful cultural and temporal context for writers for convey information and activate a reader’s schema (see Van Gorp, p. 63, p. 66).

Frames work because there is an implied relationship among the elements in a message that has been organized by the communicator (Maher, 2003). The frame, like a recipe, or instructions for building a fire, contains the elements needed for the reader to follow the directions and make sense of what is in the frame and reach a conclusion. According to Gamson et al., we all “walk around with media generated images of the world,” and use them to construct meaning about political and social issues (p. 374). These media-generated messages contain ideology, values, and beliefs that may be intentional or unintentional on the part of the journalist (Gamson et al., p. 374). Thus, these chosen frames reveal what the journalist considers relevant to the topic at hand (Chong & Druckman, 2007), because they are the organizers of the presented frames (Maher, p. 88). Consequently, how news stories are pieced together can create additional relationships among the components of the story.

The story is not just that found in media reporting, but also in frame changes. Gamson et al. (p. 385) describe what Snow and Benford call “frame transformation,” which refers to changes over time in the action, particularly in a contest, such as a political campaign. These changes over time in frames are part of the larger context (Reese, p. 149). If examined from this perspective, the focus changes as events unfold, and what has great relevance at one instant may have much less in another. With this viewpoint, “a frame is more like a storyline or unfolding narrative about an issue,” because stories frame events as they occur over time (Gamson et al., p. 385).

### **Determining What Matters**

The news frame organizes everyday reality, and is also part of everyday reality. A frame is therefore part of the shared beliefs and common knowledge associated with a society (Pan &



Kosicki, 1993). Yet multiple frame interpretations are possible by a diverse group of information consumers (Edy & Meirick, p. 121; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Van Gorp, p. 63).

Gitlin (p. 7) defines media frames as “persistent patterns of recognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, wither verbal or visual.” Frames tell us what matters (Gitlin, p. 6.) and what to think about. They define how to manage what matters, negotiate and comprehend what matters, and just as importantly, the actions to take to deal with what matters (Goffman, 1986, 10-11; Yarnell, 1985; Entman, 1993).

Bronstein (2005) considers media framing to be “critical to studies of news and social movements because the ways in which journalists present a movement can influence public willingness to lend support” (p. 786), and that manipulation of media frames can result in different attitudes by the same group of respondents on the same issue. This is supported by the often-cited research by Kahneman and Tversky (1984), and replicated by Druckman (2001a), who found that the same information placed in narratives that framed the information differently, win-lose, altered interpretation and decision making by the recipient.

Public opinion can also be molded by frames, “by emphasizing certain voices, highlighting particular views, and generating discourse on certain issues,” (Zhou & Moy, p. 82).

A common presumption discussed by Druckman (2001b) is that elites have considerable leeway in using frames to influence and manipulate citizens’ opinions, because they care about what people think, and want to get them to behave in certain ways (Entman, 2007, p. 165).

Druckman’s perspective is that framing effects may occur because citizens actually delegate to credible elites to help them sort through the many frames presented. Questions news consumers should then ask are: “Who is in the news frame?” and, “Whose frame am I entering?”

Individuals and organizations involved in an issue, or simply those with an opinion on the issue, seek to have their positions known. Conflict among stakeholders is a main driving force of the news, (Miller & Riechert, 2001, p. 112). Miller and Riechert state that (112):

Stakeholders seek to articulate their positions to accommodate journalistic norms and win support, competing for news media attention. The more a particular stakeholder group is quoted in the news articles, the more prominently their particular issue definition is represented in news coverage.

—Miller and Riechert, *The spiral of opportunity and frame resonance: Mapping the issue cycle in news and public discourse*

At its core, framing is essentially about selection and salience, and restricts the number of thematically related attributes in the frame to create a coherent picture of a particular object (McCombs & Ghanem, p. 70; Entman, 1993, p. 52). Take, for example, the term “biodiversity,” which was originally narrowly applied and focused primarily on species depletion and tropical deforestation. Weber and Word (2001) examined the redefinition of the term as social influences subtly changed the word’s meaning as it was integrated into the national vocabulary to “sensitize the public to the destruction of natural habitats” (p. 488). What they found was as the term was adopted, used, and integrated into different frameworks, the meaning was adapted for more general use and took on different values and perspectives. Biodiversity came to incorporate “variability in genes, species, or ecological assemblages of organisms, as well as in the services they provided to natural ecosystem and to humans (Weber & Word, p. 488).

### **Framing and the Environment**

Why does framing matter in the areas of conservation, environmentalism, or cooperation and partnerships? Because framing is not one-way communication, but is a social construct (Tuchman, 1978, p. 184), and thus negotiated phenomenon (Tuchman, 1978, p. 194).

If one goes back to the seminal work of Erving Goffman, a frame referred to the “inevitability relational dimension of meaning” (p. xiii). Plainly stated, frames are used to negotiate, manage, and comprehend reality; and then to choose appropriate repertoires of cognition and action (Goffman, p.10 -11). Frames are an individual’s perceptions of the world, including and his or her place in it, based on life experiences, education, and attitudes. Basically frames do not exist in isolation; they comprise shared areas of meaning between individuals, groups, or cultures.

This means that frames provide journalists with a tool for presenting relatively complex issues in a way that is efficient and accessible to their audience because they play into and build upon existing schemas (Scheufele & Tewksbury, p. 12; Entman, 1992, p. 53). Issues like global climate change, nanotechnology, and ecosystem restoration are complicated issues and require frameworks for putting them into context. Of equal importance is that public framing of an issue exerts substantial influence on news messages (Scheufele & Tewksbury, p. 12).

A meaningful framework is also needed to gain the audience’s attention. According to Anthony Downs, “The American public attention rarely remains sharply focused upon any one domestic issue for very long even if it involves a continuing problem of crucial importance to society” (1972, p. 38-39). Downs further states that there is a systematic “issue-attention cycle” that seems to strongly influence public attitudes and behavior concerning domestic problems.

There are stages, or dynamics to the “issue-attention cycle” that garner public and media attention (p. 39):

- 1) Pre-problem stage where a highly undesirable condition exists, but the public has not attention focused on it even though experts and interest groups are alarmed;
- 2) Alarmed discovery stage and euphoric enthusiasm something dramatic has happened, like unsafe mercury levels in fish, now the public is aware and upset and ready to solve the problem;
- 3) Realizing the cost of the significant progress occurs when the cost of fixing the problem is realized in terms of cash and sacrifice;

- 4) Gradual decline of intense public interest happens when people realize the level of difficulty in solving the problem, and how costly it will be to them as individuals; and the
- 5) Post problem stage, the final stage where the issue moves into prolonged twilight, with spasmodic recurrences of interest, like American dependency on foreign oil.

Surprisingly “on issues of risk versus benefits, nonexperts’ trust of experts is often trumped by the nonexperts’ personal experience” (Weber & Word, p. 488). A layman’s first-hand testimony of direct experience, has more weight than the technical jargon of an expert. Direct knowledge is a more compelling frame than another’s expertise (Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000). Framing in the media and by the media then matters because “Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual” (Gitlin, p.7).

As stakeholders put forth their voices in the process there is a resulting impact on the frames presented to information consumers. The public arena allows many voices to be heard, each with varying claims of certainty, credibility, and influence. Framing allows us to select which fragments of information and voices to emphasize, and which to relegate to a lesser position of importance (Weber & Word, p. 491). Thus, according to Weber and Word, framing is about valuing information.

When Kaufman and Smith (1999, p. 164) looked into the framing of land-use change conflicts, they took the approach that “frames may significantly influence public participation in decisions to change a community’s physical space,” in the context of a landfill dispute. They recommend practitioners identify frames and respond to them when intervening in physical change conflict. Once a cooperative, collaborative, or other environmental partnership commences, there are mutual and competing environmental goals in play, and knowing the

frames from which partners emerge matters. “Frames held by conflicting parties color the content of their perceptions and reduce their need to gather information and examine details” (Kaufman & Smith, p. 164). Consequently, when frames are transferred from one set of circumstances to another, an imperfect match may prompt solutions that are inappropriate for the new set of conditions.

People are said to apply frames to everything they observe, and form conjecture about what has happened, and expectations of what will happen (Goffman, 38). Such decoding, or interpretation, is an active process on the part of the reader, listener, or viewer, and is based on the totality of situation, social roles, and past experiences. This means each person reading the same story, or seeing the same event, can take away a different interpretation (Gamson et al., p. 375).

Framing of an issue needs to be done for stakeholders as well as by stakeholders. Avrai and Gregory (2003) took an experimental approach to understanding how best to involve stakeholders in environmental cleanups; it turned out to be a matter of framing the issue. Asked to identify meaningful ways to involve stakeholders in establishing what has been considered a very technical goal identifying cleanup priorities, Avrai and Gregory tested two decision-making approaches to the problem. One was framing cleanup priorities based on “societal values” and the other frame was based on “scientific knowledge.” In the experiment, participants were asked to allocate \$30 million to three of five possible sites for environmental cleanup, all of the money had to be spent on only three sites from five alternatives, and some uncertainty was introduced into the decision-making process. Although framed differently, participants in both trials made similar judgments about their desired level of public and expert participation in making cleanup choices (p. 1473).

Both groups were provided with one of two versions of a 23-page workbook, one science-knowledge based, the other societal-values based. Both groups received specific information about the human and environmental health risks associated with radiation and the principal issues associated with cleaning up a contaminated site. Participants were also provided with supplemental information. In both scenarios, four common information elements were available to participants: background information about radiation, the contaminated sites, ongoing cleanup efforts, and the hypothetical town of Larkspur; more detailed information about the human and environmental risk of radiation; close-ended self-rating questions; and a series of three related choice tasks. Overall participants' self-reported knowledge increased significantly based on this process of learning, but those in the societal-values group showed an increase in "their level of trust in the ability of risk managers working for the government to do a good job cleaning contaminated soils" (Avrai & Gregory, p. 1474). This refers back to the concept of placing greater value on personal experience, culture and knowledge, with the societal-values frame having greater weight than the scientific-knowledge frame. A different perspective emerged from the work of Miller and Riechert (p. 115), who examined framing by stakeholders involved in wetlands preservation. They found each group perceived the issue differently. Property owners framed the issue in terms of property rights, while conservationists used terms focused on aspects related to wildlife habitat, habitat restoration, or habitat preservation.

Brewer (2002) conducted research on how framing can influence opinion by shaping how citizens connect their abstract values to political issues. He stated that framing can influence mass opinion, by shaping how people link their values to political issues, and in turn political elites may then be able to shape the public's understanding of political issues by disseminating value frames through the mass media. Citizens also use popular wisdom, and counter-frames

that criticize the dominant media frames, as well as create their own frames taking the value words from the conventional media when making their own points (Gamson as cited in Brewer, 2002). Nelson and Oxley remind us that journalists “concoct their own frames, while powerful communication agents, including elected officials, interest groups, and lobbyists, create and promote frames with hopes of planting them in mass-media outlets” (1999, p. 1041; Zhou & Moy, 2007, p. 81). Framing presumes, and research has shown, that issue frames can influence opinion (Nelson & Oxley, 1999).

So what about information presented in the “news?” Gitlin says it best: “media frames are largely unspoken and unacknowledged, but they organize the world for both the journalist writing the story and to an important degree for those who rely on those reports” (Gitlin, p. 7). Framing in the, media and by the media, matters because: “Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual” (Gitlin, p.7). Sheaffer (2007) says the media influence public opinion by emphasizing certain issues over others, referring to message strength and direction. Writing in *Journalism Quarterly*, McCombs (1992) makes reference to Walter Lippmann’s observation that news matters are not the everyday mundane events of a society, not a mirror held up to reflect all of society but reflect instead issues that end up in the courts, government policy arenas, or are matters for the police. Consequently events and issues that generate media coverage are those that generate controversy, fear, and excitement. These issues are then foremost in the thoughts of mass media consumers. And though people acquire information from the mass media they may or may not change their minds about what they have learned (McCombs, p.4).

Thus framing asks, how do people think about an issue when they think about it (Edy & Meirick, 2007, p. 122)? This requires framing to shape the information that is put forth to prime the consumer about what to think about (Entman, 2007, p. 165). Early work by McCombs tested the hypothesis that news coverage influences public perception of what the important issues are (1992, p. 815). This implies that what is in the news is newsworthy. But Bergston, Fan, and Celarier (1999), discussing the role of the media in influencing opinion on environmental issues, assert that there is a relationship between the relative emphasis given by the media to environmental issues and the degree of salience the topics have for the general public or the political agenda. So is conservation newsworthy? Or is it only newsworthy if there is conflict driving the news story?

Writing in *Social Alternatives*, Doyle (1992) describes the alleged role of the media as an important advocate of social change in environmental awareness. Doyle tells us the media traditionally give us preset frames with the choices of “single issue”, “interest group” conflicting with “competing interest groups.” With this as the model, special interests and political group squabbles, and there is no room for the “average person.” His examination of wet tropical forests in Australia resulted in the assertion that “media does not merely reflect the people, but dictates terms of reference to society” (Doyle, 1992).

This matters because according to a September 2007 Gallup Poll, when asked the open ended question of what the most pressing problem facing the United States is, the environment rated ninth out of thirty-three noneconomic problems (Gallup Poll News Service, 2007a). The environment does not rank highly in the country’s conscience, yet Americans say the government is doing too little, and many worry about environmental conditions (Gallup Poll News Service, 2007b). In the 1980s and 1990s environmental issues had increased salience



attributed to the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989, the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day in 1990, and the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992 (Soroka.2002, p. 268). Media sources today are ubiquitous for anyone with cable or satellite television, radio, or internet access.

Newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* are major daily newspapers and can be considered elite, national newspapers (Luther & Zhou, 2005; McCombs, 2004, p. 113). McCombs (2004, p. 114) informs students of framing that the role of elite news media is to initiate widespread coverage of new topics; and journalists framing of the news is an example of intermedia news framing as they influence other journalists. Based on McCombs proposal, Steve Smith's (1997) assertion that choosing the frame for a story being the most important decision a journalist makes is critical for the news consumer.

Smith's focus is on civic journalism, which means the frame/frames should deal more with public life and focus on process, rather than a typical conflict frame. When using frame analysis to examine news media content, researchers are examining frames created by journalists that allow them to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely, how it is packaged, appropriately categorized, and then relayed to the audience (Gitlin, p.7). In this way, frames are similar to compressed digital data files: a great deal of information is condensed into a compact package for transfer. Readers, listeners, or viewers are able to extract the complete meaning of these compact packages based on their shared use and understanding of metaphors, catchphrases, or symbolic devices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Van Gorp, p. 64).

National news media leaders can also at times command the news media attention, with local issues that involve watersheds and ecosystems, and local citizens as stakeholders generating national coverage, which leads to coverage in the local newspaper where the issue or

events are playing out. One such example is that of the threatened Gulf sturgeon. A story on the leaping prehistoric fish ran in the *New York Times* on July 4, 2007 (Goodnough), and the same story ran the same day in *The Gainesville Sun*; subsequent stories about leaping sturgeon ran on July 7, 2007 (Voyles) and July 30, 2007 (Crabbe).

Mainstream news organizations argue that competing frames are treated equivalently, and as a result news frames are not slanted (Entman, 2007, p. 165). This can be revealed by examining news stories on cooperative conservation and partnerships. Another side to the question of emergent frames is whether or not organizations involved in environmental partnerships also attempt to treat the topic with an even hand in their news releases, or if the frame they present is solely their own.

This research will look at framing of “cooperative conservation.” At its core framing is basically environmental partnerships and collaboration that cover a range of environmental issues, involving a wide or small group of partners dependent upon the project scope and scale.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions are addressed in this study:

- (1) How do the four federal Departments (Defense, Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce) and one independent agency (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) listed in E.O. No. 13,352 frame the issue of cooperative conservation in their news releases?
- (2) Are the cooperative conservation frames consistent among the federal organizations listed in E.O. No. 13,352 in their news releases?
- (3) How do the following nonfederal partner organizations: American Heritage Rivers, The Sonoran Institute, Chesapeake Bay Program, Blackfoot Challenge, Long Island Sound Study, The Wilderness Society, The Trust for Public Land, Sierra Club, Watch,

National Fish Habitat Action Plan, NatureServe, and The Nature Conservancy, working in partnership with the Departments of Defense, Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, listed in E.O. No. 13,352 frame cooperative conservation in their news releases?

(4) Are the cooperative conservation frames consistent among the federal organizations listed in E.O. No. 13,352 and their nonfederal partners in their news releases?

(5) Can frames found in examined newspaper articles about cooperative conservation be linked to specific news releases issued by the federal or nongovernmental organizations?

(6) Over time, have the frames changed or remained consistent in the news releases and news stories?

## CHAPTER 3 METHODS

*“The method one should choose when approaching any topic, including news, depends on upon the question one wants to answer” (Tuchman, 1991, p. 79).*

### **Data Selection**

This research will explore emergent frames and frame consistency among and between organizations via newspaper articles and organizations’ own news releases on the topic of cooperative conservation and conservation partnerships. Newspaper articles from major national and smaller local newspapers, as well as news releases, will be analyzed to determine the frames used by the writers. Examining all possible news releases on cooperative conservation released by the federal and nongovernmental organizations available, and the subsequent print news stories, in the selected 4 ½-year time frame will allow for the discovery and notation of any frame transformation that takes place in telling the stories of cooperative conservation. It also provides an opportunity to possibly identify news stories that originate from news releases produced by federal and nongovernmental organizations on the topic of cooperative conservation.

Newspapers were selected for this research because according to the Columbia Journalism Review (2009), 86% of adults over the age of 18 read local community newspapers, (that are in markets served by newspapers with less than 25,000 circulation) with 59% considering their local newspaper to be a primary source of news and information. Also, including large and small newspapers takes into account that many cooperative conservation projects, even if they are part of a national program, are local or watershed level in scale and scope. Local newspapers are also important because cooperative conservation projects have been described and promoted as combining local community efforts with regional and national partners. News articles analyzed will be from August 30, 2004, when the executive order was

signed, through January 20, 2009. This covers the time period from when then President George W. Bush signed the executive order to when a new president took office.

News releases produced during this same time period by the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; as well as their nongovernmental partners (American Heritage Rivers, The Sonoran Institute, Chesapeake Bay Program, Blackfoot Challenge, Long Island Sound Study, The Wilderness Society, The Trust for Public Land, Sierra Club, Watch, National Fish Habitat Action Plan, NatureServe, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, and The Nature Conservancy) will be similarly analyzed for framing techniques, frame consistency and frame shifts over time. Their Websites were searched for news releases on the different topics.

The initial search of newspaper articles on the Lexis-Nexis and Access World News database used the terms “cooperative conservation,” “cooperative,” “conservation,” “partner,” and “partnership” produced over 5,000 articles. The database search looked for these terms in the newspaper headlines and body of the news text. Using those search terms individually and in combination required exclusion of news stories about farm, grocery and news cooperatives; conservation commissions; conservation services; and energy, water and cultural conservation that did not pertain to the executive order. This also meant the exclusion of news stories on conservation technology, business partnerships, and organizations with the terms conservation, partner, or cooperative in their name that were not related to the research. Searches took place in July 2007, January 2008, and September 2009. Other databases searched include the federal cooperative conservation Website (<http://cooperativeconservation.gov/>) and the Departments’

Websites for news releases produced by the Department of Commerce-NOAA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Defense.

### **Data Analysis**

After excluding stories that did not pertain to the topic, 179 actual newspaper items and 171 news releases that were directly relevant to the issue of cooperative conservation were examined for frames and framing techniques. All relevant news releases and news stories were examined to determine message consistency among the federal organizations in the study, between federal organizations and nongovernmental organizations in the study, and to identify frame shifts between organizations and over time. To be included, news articles had to be at least 400 words (Johnson, Davis and Cronin, 2009). No media advisories were included in their analysis.

### **Coding**

All included news stories and news releases were examined using document type specific coding sheets (see appendices A and B). A pretest was done using 10% of the research sample to test the coding sheets for both the news releases and news articles, by the researcher. Based on the pretest, coding sheets were refined for both document types. To ensure greater accuracy and reduce bias, two coders examined the data--the researcher and a second coder. The second coder was trained in framing analysis, and had no investment in this research topic, and coded 10% of both the news releases (18) and news stories (17). The second coder is a private sector public relations professional with a background in military public affairs.

Items for the second coder were randomly selected (Hardin et al., p. 221; Ki, 2006). Discrepancies were discussed to determine how the differences were arrived at, with those

outliers being science frames rather than partnership, cooperation, or collaboration frames. The decision to include them as primary frames was ultimately made by the researcher.

All documents were read in their entirety to determine the main topic and length. They were all read a second time to identify quoted sources, key terms, frames, and framing techniques including metaphors, analogies, repetition, and language in the frames (Appendices A and B). The third time the coders read the document to identify the vital data such as media outlet or organization, item title, number of words, writer, or contacts, date, etc.

Framing techniques sought out in the documents included frames as boundaries for discussing a particular event or issue, or the selection, organization, and presentation of information (Altheide, p. 29). Additional techniques included identification of sources, people, and occupation (Hardin, Simpson, Whiteside and Garriss, 2007). Such framing sets the foundation of who is important in the story and who is not (Weber & Word, p. 491), and which points of view have been included or ignored. Including this level of analysis allowed the researcher to examine if there is equality in representation between federal and nonfederal entities.

Another technique that was sought in the data, and discussed by Goffman (p. 201) was the exclusion of expected voices from media frames. Language, another technique, was also examined. J.B. Lane (1998) suggests the examination of the use of words, phrases, sources, or repetition of themes, while Gamson & Modigliani (1989) and Van Gorp (p. 64) propose studying the text to identify metaphors, catchphrases, or symbolic devices. According to Callaghan and Schnell (p. 187), techniques to look for also include choosing to cover one side or both sides of an issue, a writer putting forth his or her own interpretation, simplifying events or stories, or by simply allocating greater coverage to one issue over another, the media act as gatekeepers,

advocates, and interpreters of political themes and information. Data analysis included framing techniques such as story length and type, newspaper placement, and headlines, as well as putting an issue into the context of problem, causes, solution, responsibility, and moral judgments (Entman, p. 52).

The comparison of news releases to newspaper items allowed for the determination of whether or not frames and framing techniques produced by participating organizations are the same as those that are relayed to the general public through newspapers. According to Miller and Riechert (p. 107), “Opposing stakeholders try to gain public and policy maker support for their positions by altering the frames or interpretive dimensions by which the facts are evaluated.” Examining the messages over time allows the researcher to determine if the frames used change over time, who changes them, and when the frames changed.

**Coder agreement.** There was consistency in the emergent frames identified by both coders. The second coder offered frame and framing technique refinement. Both coders were in agreement on primary and secondary frames and techniques. Resolution of coder disagreement was through discussion, with the researcher making the final decision about primary and secondary frames.

### **Database Construction**

An access database was created to organize news releases by organization, organization type, date, frames and techniques, source quoted, source affiliation, and who produced the news release. The database also included news stories that could be organized by date, author, news outlet, article type, source quoted, source affiliation, frames, and techniques. Inclusion of all news releases and news stories allowed for reports to be run based on release dates and news story publication date, sources quoted, organization and frames by organization to determine



relationships between news releases and news stories. The database aided in identifying relationships between news releases and news stories based on date, quotes, quoted sources, and frames. To better identify relationships between news releases and news stories, after comparing the dates between the news releases and news stories, each news release was individually reviewed to determine its relationship with a news story.

### **An Exception to the Rule**

How cooperative conservation was framed by the federal organizations responsible for complying with Executive Order No. 13,352, and their partners was explored through Department, Agency, and nonfederal partner news releases as well as news stories published between August 24, 2004, and January 19, 2009. Three organizations listed as nonfederal are American Heritage Rivers, Chesapeake Bay Program, and the Long Island Sound Study; all of these organizations are federally led cooperative efforts similar to consortia between federal, state, tribes, and local communities engaged in the joint venture of addressing conservation and restoration efforts. This research looked for consistency among federal organizations in their news releases, as well as frames over time in both news releases and news stories. A powerful missing voice in the research was that of the Department of Defense. Database searches yielded few news releases or media advisories about cooperative conservation released by the Department of Defense, which effectively removed it from the research.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

### **The Data**

#### **Press Releases**

Press releases used in the research totaled 171; of those the majority of them were produced by federal organizations. Federal news releases totaled 141 of the 171 examined. Three of the federal news releases were joint news releases of five organizations, and one was a joint release between two federal organizations. Most of the federal news releases were written at the national level, covering more than one region, multiple states, or applied to the entire nation. They covered issues such as landowner credits or tools to be used nationwide (See table 4-1). Of these news releases, 20 had the term “cooperative conservation” in the title, 30 used the term in the lead, and only one used the term in a pull quote (see table 4-2). Of the nongovernmental organizations none used cooperative conservation in the title, lead, or pull quote.

Nongovernmental news releases made up 30 of the 173 news releases examined (see table 4-1). Other organizations such as American Heritage Rivers and the Wilderness Society, initially reviewed for the research, did not produce news releases that included references to cooperative conservation, public-private partnerships, or collaboration, and were therefore not included in the analysis. News release contact information was used as an additional identifier, rather than as data to be analyzed.

Table 4-1 Federal News Releases August 2004 – January 2009

Organization	State level release	Regional level release	National level release
U.S. Department of the Interior	8	3	32
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	1	2	18
U.S. Department of Commerce: NOAA	14	7	8
U.S. Department of Agriculture	10	3	31
U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Executive Office of the White House	1	2	0
U.S. Department of the Interior & U.S. Department of Agriculture			1
Trust for Public Land	4	0	0
Long Island Sound	0	3	0
Penobscot Restoration Trust	7	0	0
NatureServe	0	0	1
The Nature Conservancy	2	0	0
National Fish Habitat Action Plan	0	0	1
Chesapeake Bay Program	0	8	0
Blackfoot Challenge	1	0	0
Sonoran Institute	2	1	0

Table 4-2 Press release titles, leads, and pull quotes including “cooperative conservation”

Organization	Cooperative conservation in title	Cooperative conservation in lead	Cooperative conservation in pull quote
U.S. Department of the Interior	13	19	0
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	3	3	0
U.S. Department of Agriculture	2	7	1

## News Stories

News stories included in the analysis numbered 179; and all items were more than 400 words. Of these, 121 were written by local newspapers staff, 29 were from wire services, and the remaining were guest, syndicated columnists, letters to the editor, editorial board pieces, and opinion pieces. Most items were news stories that could be found in section “A” or “B,” and none were part of a series (see table 4-3). Associated Press items were all identified as “news,” and exact placement in specific newspapers could not be determined. Most news items were state and regional, followed by national and then local pieces. Even though a news stories might

have been local, their implications were often beyond the local and state boundaries. Whether the story was originated locally by staff or a national syndicate similarly made little difference in the article's scope. State and regional news pieces were written by and local staff of wire services.

News stories placed in section "A" were at the local and national level. However, local stories that had state implications such as the A1 story of the Penobscot River Trust buying river dams, "River trust to buy dams on Penobscot three sites key to groups fish conservation plan" (Miller, 2008 August 22) made it into the front news section. Items in section "B" included regional issues such as the Chesapeake Bay, a watershed that encompasses five states: "EPA grants support efforts to restore bay," (Latane, 2008, July 31) as well as local stories of local people being nationally recognized, "Interior Secretary Kempthorne impressed with collation" (Newhouse, 2006 October 11).

Local and state subjects or projects were written about as examples of local issues that were given national recognition, such as salmon restoration in Maine discussed at a national cooperative conservation meeting, "Maine salmon restoration lauded at meeting" (Miller, 2006 January 12) or "Winegrape leaders honored for conservation efforts" (Capital Press, 2005, September 2). Another approach was the national story with a local angle, such as "Helping birds can earn landowners exemptions" (West Hawaii Today, 2006). The example is local, but the implications of landowner exemptions applied nationally. Unlike federal news releases, fewer newspaper items had cooperative conservation in the headline, lead, or pull quote (see table 4-4).

Table 4-3 Newspaper story descriptors

Section placement or type newspaper item		News item levels		Wire service	
A/News	47	Local/County	18	National/Domestic	12
B/Metro/Local/State	50	State/Region	106	State/Region	16
Opinion/Editorial	29	National	54	Sports	1
Business/Finance	7	International	1		
County/Region	0			Syndicated Columnist	1
Outdoors	10				
Other (Leisure, This Week)	6				

Table 4-4 Newspapers headlines, leads and pull quotes including “cooperative conservation”

Cooperative conservation in the headline	Cooperative conservation in lead	Cooperative conservation in pull quote
12	15	0

### Research Question One

*How do the three federal Departments (Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce) and one independent agency (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), listed in E.O. No. 13352 frame the issue of cooperative conservation in their news releases?*

Four major frames emerged from the news releases examined: Responsibility, Money and Commitment, Shining Examples, and Cooperative Conservation as a tool. All of the federal voices quoted spoke to these frames. According to federal news releases, responsibility was not simply in the hands of the federal government, but extended to the larger “We” of the nation as a whole. Money was a powerful frame as the granting of dollars indicated support, endorsement, investment, and implied value to the groups and projects receiving and giving the funds. That federal entities were providing resources both fiscal and human to cooperative conservation efforts was considered a commitment to initiate and continue engagement in cooperative conservation. Cooperative conservation was analogous to a conservation Swiss Army Knife, a multifaceted tool that included memorandums of understanding, grants, credits, hope for at-risk

species, and preservation for future generations. Most importantly, this tool was a way to achieve conservation success, and yielded results.

### **Frame 1: Responsibility--Shared Call to Action**

The responsibility frame meant that everyone from individuals to corporations would take on accountability and ownership for the environmental conservation—the shared call to action. It also included the conflicting view, of having no accountability for conservation efforts. Cleaning up, restoring, and improving the environment was not considered something to be left to the federal government alone, but was instead touted as work to be done together “through collaboration and sharing resources,” according to Alan J. Steinberg, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Administrator (*Nearly \$1 million for projects to improve the health of Long Island Sound*, 2007, October 29). Alex Beehler, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), reinforced this position when he stated: “The challenges of conservation don't reside in one government agency. They belong to all of us,” (*Secretaries and Leaders of U.S. Natural Resources and Environmental Agencies Establish Partnership for Cooperative Conservation*, 2009, January 15). Former Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton said “From his first day in office, the president has made it clear that he believes the best thing we can do for conservation is to tap into the energy, ingenuity and love for the land of the American people” (*President Bush reinforces commitment to cooperative conservation*, 2005, February 9). Speaking at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation in 2005, Donald Rumsfeld said, “Conservation is much more than a duty. It is really a proud part of the department's heritage” (*Rumsfeld: Military readiness linked to conservation*, 2005, August, 29).

This call to work together was ordered to begin with federal entities and expand out to the wider world of current and potential partners. In a Department of the Interior (DOI) news release dated July 12, 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening session on cooperative conservation*), President George W. Bush said:

My administration is committed to working in a spirit of respect and cooperation with those seeking to protect our land, and sea, and sky. We believe cooperative conservation is the best way to protect the environment. This means we must focus on the needs of the states, and respect the unique knowledge of local authorities, and welcome the help of private groups and volunteers.

Federal entities responded to President Bush's challenge by engaging in cooperative efforts, and also restated their intentions and actions in their new releases according to the organization's mission. DOI applied the call to its mission when Gale Norton said "Whether on land or at sea, the best approach is to work in close cooperation with states, territories, conservation groups, landowners and others," (*Norton commends progress in protecting imperiled coral reef ecosystems*, 2005, March 3). She continued to repeat this sentiment when discussing Wildlife Action Plans being implemented by the federal government in cooperation and partnership with states, tribes, and local governments, conservation groups, private landowners, and others. Gale Norton later said, "Through State Wildlife Grants, we are empowering states, territories, and their many partners to do what the federal government cannot do alone," (*Norton announces 56 states and territories have submitted wildlife action plans; Blueprint to keep species from becoming extinct*, 2005, November 2).

One example is the following quote: "President Bush challenged the federal agencies to cooperate with landowners to enhance and create wetlands for a better environment," said U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Bruce Knight in a news release dated April 22, 2005 (*USDA provides more than \$19 million to fund*

*conservation technologies and approaches*). This call to action resulted in new partnerships, agreements, and memorandums of agreement between federal organizations. Some news releases spoke of newly created partnerships between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (EPA, NOAA will help coastal communities with coastal growth, development issues, 2005, January 27); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the "Maine community" (NOAA gives Calais, Maine observatory the first Preservation Partnership Disk; Commemorative marker promotes conservation of nation's heritage, 2005, July 1); USDA and farmers in California (Earth Day 2005: Johanns reports wetlands initiative results: Healthy Forests Initiatives advancing, 2005, April 22); USDA and the state of Oklahoma (USDA and Oklahoma partner for 9,000-acre conservation plan, 2007, April 23); USDA, Department of the Interior, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (USDA, DOI and AFWA sign habitat credit trading agreement, 2007, April 13); DOI and DOD (Secretaries and leaders of U.S. natural resources and environmental agencies establish partnership for cooperative conservation, 2009, January 15); and USDA and the US Army (Secretaries and leaders of U.S. natural resources and environmental agencies establish partnership for cooperative conservation, 2005, January 15).

This alphabet soup of relationships was called a "new way of doing things" by Gale Norton, then Secretary of the Interior, who said that DOI managers working with "local communities, states and tribes" was "an important change in the way we do business" (Interior Department managers work with states, counties, tribes, in early stages of environmental studies, 2005, June 10; New rule change to give states, counties and tribes active role in land-use planning decisions, 2005, March 16). Norton stated that the changes were in support of an Executive Order on Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, and the Department



of the Interior looked “forward to having our managers working with local, state and tribal governments as cooperating agents” thus supporting the goal of “broader public participation in resource-management decisions.” Norton was not alone in calling cooperative conservation a new way of doing business. Bob Lohn, the northwest regional director of NOAA, called the cooperative conservation efforts on a salmon recovery plan a “new era” in which “citizens at the local level are driving salmon recovery” (*Administration’s salmon recovery efforts remain on track*, 2005, April 27). Engaging and empowering the public was conveyed not merely as citizen stewardship (*President Bush reinforces commitment to cooperative conservation*, 2005, February 9; *Federal and state officials award grants to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound*, 2005, May 12) but also as a means of equipping “America's eager army” of “citizen conservationists” (*Top administration officials and conservation leaders meet to discuss cooperative conservation*, 2006, June 26; *Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening session on cooperative conservation*, 2006, July 12).

Secretaries, undersecretaries, and deputy secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense departments and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrators and assistant administrators, repeatedly said that responsibility for the environment is a shared one--shared by everyone. EPA Administrator Johnson consistently called the citizenry to action stating again and again that “environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility” (*Chesapeake Executive Council joins with partners to usher in new policies to protect bay forests, farms and waterways*, 2006, September 22; *Bay region leaders take new actions to accelerate Chesapeake clean-up*, 2007, December 5; *Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening session on cooperative conservation*, 2006, July 12). Lynn Scarlett, then Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary stated on September

30, 2008, “Conservation of our oceans requires that citizen stewards combine scientific knowledge with passion and commitment to protect the world's waters and the life those waters sustain” (*Partners unveil ‘Hands Across the Ocean’ exhibit on the National Mall project concludes artist’s 27-year environmental; Art project*). “Citizen-stewards,” according to then Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, “are often our most effective conservationists,” (*Partnership in Georgia, North Carolina to receive coastal wetland grants to protect wildlife habitat*, 2004, October 27). These citizen-stewards specifically included anglers, farmers and ranchers. Efforts were made to reach out to all environmental constituencies. This included the recognized need for private landowners to engage in cooperative conservation, with consistent invitations to them with statements such as this by Dirk Kempthorne: “Federal agencies play a key role in the recovery of hundreds of threatened and endangered species, but they cannot succeed without the support of private landowners,” (*Secretary Kempthorne announces new conservation mechanism for threatened and endangered species*, 2008, July 31). They also included more concrete invitations such as water-quality crediting. USDA Natural Resources and Environment Undersecretary Mark Rey said, “We believe that voluntary, incentive based approaches are the most effective way to achieve sound resource management and conservation on private lands” (*USDA and EPA sign water quality credit trading agreement to improve water quality*, 2006, October 13).

Yet stewardship was not simply the purview of the average citizen, but of large corporations and small companies alike. Gale Norton, in commending the Irvine Ranch Land Reserves stated, “A conservation-minded corporate citizen is working hand-in-hand with a conservation organization and other partners thoughtfully and purposefully to create an environment where both people and wildlife can thrive” (*Norton presents Irvine Company and*

*Nature Conservancy partners in stewardship award for work on Irvine Ranch, 2005, May 26).*

Not only were small businesses recognized for their role in cooperative conservation, at the other end of the continuum Wal-Mart was commended for its “generous contribution” to the Acres for America foundation that allowed the foundation to “protect and restore important areas of wildlife habitat that otherwise might never be conserved,” said Gale Norton (*Norton commends National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wal-Mart for landmark partnership to protect wildlife habitat, 2005, April 12*). Such a call to action using cooperative conservation is a way to achieve not just the federal goals set out in the executive order, but also “our collective national conservation goals,” according to Mark Rey, then USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment (*The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Conservation Service formalize partnership; Emiquon restoration project to serve as key demonstration site, 2005, February 18*).

## **Frame 2: Money and Commitment**

Money and commitment were overlapping frames that would best be defined as funding in the form of grants, credits, or another type of investment in an environmental resource; commitment would best be defined as support for a program or investment in a natural resource. This commitment could be technical, financial, or the creation of a formal partnership.

Money is an investment in a natural “resource” meant a financial commitment to wetlands, bays, oceans, fisheries, endangered species and other animals, land, communities, and people. Money tended to be the main focus of NOAA and USDA news releases, yet all the federal organizations had quotes on funding in the form of grants, seed money, donations, budget legislation, credits, agency spending or references to them in the majority of their news releases. With new release headlines such as “NOAA awards more than \$1.4 million to continue development of fishery management plans in the south Atlantic” (2005, February 14), to “EPA

provides \$9 million for watershed protection” (2005, November 11), or “Veneman announces release of \$1.6 billion for voluntary conservation programs on working lands” (2004, October 22), funding as a frame was mentioned in 102 of the 173 news releases included in the research. Simple addition from all the news released shows that billions of dollars has been committed to cooperative conservation, including more than \$89 million dollars discussed in DOI news releases, almost \$2 billion in USDA funding, more than \$7 million in NOAA grants, and more than \$36 million dollars in funding from EPA.

## **Grants**

NOAA, EPA, and USDA announced a number of grants for cooperative conservation and collaborative partnerships. NOAA used a “your name here” type template for announcing awards or grants for conservation projects. The standard quote was “This grant allows the \_\_\_\_\_ to continue to develop strategies and fishery management plans that provide sound and responsible management of our important fishery resources.” These quotes are always attributed to retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and a NOAA administrator. Grants are a logical frame, given President George W. Bush’s proposed challenge of cost-share grants as a tool for federal land managers to use in creating cooperative conservation projects (*Secretary Norton announces \$12.9 million in grants to support conservation in 30 states and Puerto Rico*, 2003, September 16). The EPA talked about seed money to grow partnerships (*EPA provides \$9 million for watershed protection*, 2005, November 10), or partnerships with funding, that “brings together federal state and local resources” (*Partnership between Minnesota and USDA will restore wetlands: \$4 million will help environmentally sensitive wetlands on more than 7,000 acres*, 2004, October 25). Announcing \$19 million in grants, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Chief Bruce Knight said the projects will help farmers and ranchers address their current conservation needs (*USDA provides more than \$19 million to fund conservation technologies and approaches*, 2005, August 24).

### **Funding and legislation as proof of support**

With the announcement of nearly \$38 million available for conservation efforts, Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner stated, “These funding opportunities are examples of the Bush Administration's continuing commitment to encouraging cooperative conservation between government and private partners” (*Conner Announces \$38 million for cooperative conservation*, 2006, January 17). This particular commitment broke down into funds for innovative conservation technologies and approaches, wetlands reserve enhancements, grazing, land conservation, and Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives. Support also took the form of reiterating the availability of \$10 million in wetlands reserve enhancements (*USDA selects proposals for wetlands reserve enhancement program*, 2006, May 1). Funding to “restore, enhance, protect and manage habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife” (*USDA selects proposals for wetlands reserve enhancement program*, 2006, May 1) was also an indication of administration support and announced by NRCS Chief Bruce Knight. Chief Knight praised the effort saying “These creative, innovative partnerships extend beyond individual farms and will successfully contribute to the President's goal to improve, restore, and protect 3 million acres of wetlands by 2009.” Another expressions of Bush administration support came from NOAA news releases. When NOAA announced funding awarded to a partner, agency they included statements such as, “NOAA and the Bush Administration are working to improve the understanding of our environment and to strengthen regional initiative.” Likewise EPA also included statements to reinforce the Bush administration support for

cooperative conservation. Administrator Stephen Johnson's statement that "WaterSense advances President Bush's cooperative conservation goals through education, not regulation—spreading the ethic of water efficiency and promoting the tools to make wise water choice" (*New EPA program save dollars and makes sense*, 2006, June 12) is one such example.

Another prominent voice from EPA is Assistant Administrator for Water Benjamin Grumbles, who addressed grants for watersheds by stating, "These targeted grants reflect the administrations commitment to community-based, cooperative conservation and will grow grassroots partnerships for clean and healthy watersheds across America" (*EPA pours \$3.2 million into watersheds*, 2007, May 17). Another consistent voice on cooperative conservation is that of Lynn Scarlett, then Acting Interior Secretary, who in announcing \$3.9 million in grants for neotropical migratory bird conservation, stated that, "Through these grants, the Interior Department is supporting cooperative conservation projects and research from Alaska to Argentina" (*Acting Secretary Scarlett announces \$3.9 million in grants for neotropical migratory bird conservation*, 2006, May 13). Reiterating support by a department or agency indicated its support of the president's goals for cooperative conservation, in compliance with the Bush Administration call to action. It was also considered important to leverage money to get the most benefit for the natural resource. For example Gale Norton says in a March 3, 2005, news release (*Norton commends progress in protecting imperiled coral reef ecosystems*) that, "Through cooperative conservation, we leverage both our funding and our know-how to benefit the reefs."

The Bush Administration commitment was not limited to money, but also included the introduction of legislation and technical assistance. The Good Samaritan Clean Watershed Act was intended to reduce the legal roadblocks to those who have abandoned mines on their private

property and wish to clean them up without being held liable for these adopted mines. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson said, “Through the Good Samaritan legislation, President Bush is clearing legal roadblocks to restore America’s watersheds” (*Proposed legislation seeks cleanup of abandoned mines*, 2006, May 10). Another example of the Bush Administration commitment was announced by Agriculture Deputy Chuck Conner who called voluntary programs, like the conservation reserve enhancement program, a representation of the administration’s “commitment to the environment” and exemplified how “cooperative conservation promotes a healthier rural landscape” (*USDA and Oklahoma partner for 9,000-acre conservation plan*, 2007, April 23). Another assertions is “The Walker Farm salt marsh is a great example of President Bush's commitment to promoting cooperative conservation,” said retired Navy vice admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA administrator in a NOAA press release dated August 28, 2006 (*NOAA volunteers, partners celebrate dedication of salt marsh*). Commitment took the form of restoring a salt marsh by providing healthy habitat for fish, fowl, and other wildlife living in and around the marsh. Another aspect of commitment is technical assistance, “EPA’s national state-of-the-lakes study,” which would measure “lake health, map priorities, and motivate grass-roots stewardship, a cornerstone of the President’s Cooperative Conservation agenda,” according to EPA’s Benjamin Grumbles Assistant Administrator for Water (*EPA to examine condition of nation’s lakes*, 2006, December 6).

### **Frame 3: Shining Examples**

The shining examples frame would best be defined as containing what would be considered the best, meriting emulation and praise by others. News releases spoke of various cooperative projects as “models of cooperative conservation,” “shining examples,” “great

examples,” “perfect examples,” “outstanding,” or “worthy of recognition” and awards. This is a common theme from EPA, DOI, NOAA, and USDA. For example, South Dakota’s Agriculture in the Classroom was pointed out as a “shining example” and “model of cooperative conservation” (*Natural Resources Conservation Service honors South Dakota Agriculture in the Classroom*, 2008, October 1). Projects that were part of the Recovery Program were identified as “fruit of the extraordinary collaboration” (*Great day for endangered fish in Grand Valley as community celebrates completion of capital projects*, 2008, July 1) and commendations were presented for the Irvine Ranch Land Reserves as “what cooperative conservation is all about” (*Norton presents Irvine Company and Nature Conservancy partners in stewardship award for work on Irvine Ranch*, 2005, May 26). Such statements frame select cooperative conservation efforts and partnerships as the best, and worthy of emulation and support.

Not only were projects and programs singled out, but there was also recognition of individuals who received grants or cooperative conservation awards for their work. Chuck Conner lauded the recipients of 2006 Cooperative Conservation grants: “The recipients of these grants are excellent role models in showing how cooperative conservation is being used to accomplish regional, state, and local milestones towards pressing natural resource priorities” (*USDA announces recipients of 2006 cooperative conservation Partnership Initiative Grants*, 2006, May 25). Cooperative conservation has been recognized for years at the Department of the Interior in an annual award ceremony, and was previously known as “The Four C’s” Award for Communication, Consultation and Communication, all in the service of Conservation (*Secretary of Interior Norton confers special awards for cooperative conservation*, 2005, February 2); the award was won by the Blackfoot Challenge and the Phalen Corridor. For example in 2005 (*Secretary of Interior Norton confers special awards for cooperative*



*conservation*, February 2) joint ventures, outreach teams, programs, and individuals received cooperative conservation awards. In the February 2<sup>nd</sup> news release, individuals were recognized for “changing the way Interior engages citizens in the stewardship of the Nation’s resources,” for “being instrumental in improving collaboration,” and for “facilitating a cooperative effort between multiple federal and state partners.”

Rising to the level of excellence included “the enhancement of locally led solutions to important natural resource problems” and helped “producers cooperate and share information to address environmental challenges” (*USDA awards conservation partnership grants for North State Restoration Initiative*, 2005, May 16). Shining examples moved participants toward environmental innovation (*Latest developments from the Environmental Protection Agency*, 2005, February 18; *News brief governors and tribal leaders invited to nominate projects for watershed grants*, 2005, February 18). Prime examples of cooperative conservation were those that helped to “restore diverse plant and animal communities” (*USDA provides \$10.7 million to restore and protect wetlands in Illinois*, Johanns, 2005, February 18), and some “public private-partnerships are cooperative conservation at its best” (*USDA selects proposals for wetlands reserve enhancements program*, 2005, August 18).

#### **Frame 4: Cooperative Conservation as a Tool, for Success**

The tools for success frame could best be defined as cooperation being the equivalent of a universal tool, such as a Swiss Army Knife, useful in a variety of situations to get the job done. As a frame, cooperative conservation was a tool, but not merely any tool; it was one that yielded results or success. Cooperative conservation as a tool was identified as money, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and new partnerships. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson said the cooperative conservation agreement he was endorsing “provides another tool to help coastal

communities advance environmental, economic, and public health” (*EPA, NOAA will help coastal communities with coastal growth, development issues*, 2005, January 27). Talking about cooperative conservation, Gale Norton said the “President’s budget provides critical tools for the department to work with citizen stewards to restore and preserve the health of the land where they live, work and play, while maintaining working landscapes (*FY 2006 Interior budget emphasizes commitments, cooperative efforts performance and fiscal restraint*, 2005, February 7). Legislation was another example of support for cooperative conservation. One example is the legislation that extended permission to accept volunteers, recognizing the “fact that cooperative conservation is an essential part of our mission” (*New rule change to give states counties and tribe active role in land-use planning decisions*, 2005, March 16).

Regardless of the method of support, department and agency leadership continued to trumpet the commitment to cooperative conservation. “We have made great strides for conservation through the power of partnership with states, tribes, sporting groups, local communities, private landowners, and others” according to Gale Norton (*Interior Department issues report on cooperative conservation accomplishments during tenure of Secretary Gale Norton*, 2006, March 23

Cooperative conservation is also a tool to invest in natural resources for future generations, and for the sake of the resource itself. Gale Norton said, “People working in partnership will help us ensure that we can pass along to our children and grandchildren a country that is as healthy and whole as the one we inherited” (*Partnerships in Georgia, North Carolina to receive coastal wetland grants to protect wildlife and habitat*, 2004, October 27). Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns echoes that sentiment with statements such as, “Through the Bush Administration’s cooperative conservation efforts, landowners are working in partnership

with the government to produce tangible results, conserving natural resources for his generation, our children and our grandchildren” (*Johanns lauds voluntary conservation on private lands*, 2005, April 4). From bison, to forests for clean water, to ivory billed woodpeckers, the natural resource itself is worth conserving and preserving for its own sake according to press releases from the Department of the Interior (*Acting Secretary Scarlett announces \$3.9 million for neotropical migratory bird conservation*, 2006, May 13) and EPA (*EPA provides \$9 million for watershed protection*, 2005, November 10).

Dirk Kempthorne recognized that, “While the days of millions of free-roaming bison are gone, our [DOI] initiative acknowledges the important role of bison on the landscape, in tribal culture and in our national heritage and will work in partnerships to sustain a strong and well-coordinated conservation effort throughout this country, throughout this century” (*Kempthorne launches bison conservation initiative*, 2008, October 28). A stated goal of USDA was to plant 20 million trees using a cooperative conservation approach. Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey said, “Through this effort, we will restore healthy, functioning forested landscapes that can improve the ecosystem by delivering clean water and providing habitat for native wildlife,” (*USDA Forest Service develops partnership to plant up to 20 million trees*, 2005, April 29). Such efforts extend to second chances for presumed extinct species like the ivory-billed woodpecker. In an effort to find the elusive and possibly not extinct bird, Gale Norton said, “Decisive conservation actions and continued progress through partnerships are now required. I will appoint the best talent in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local citizens to develop a Corridor of Hope Cooperative Conservation Plan to save the ivory-billed woodpecker” (*Once-thought extinct, ivory-billed woodpecker rediscovered in Arkansas*, 2005, April 28).

The Department of the Interior did not stand alone in this effort. True to the mandate by President Bush, DOI and USDA worked together in their conservation efforts for the ivory-billed woodpecker. In the same news release, Mike Johanns, the Secretary of Agriculture reached out to support not only the quest for the elusive woodpecker, but also to work well with landowners saying “USDA is pleased to be a partner in the effort to protect ivory-billed woodpeckers. At the same time, we understand that habitat conservation can impact landowners. That’s why we are going to reach out to work cooperatively with stakeholders so we can all share in the joy of this discovery.”

### **Framing Techniques**

Techniques used in news releases by federal organizations include the use of powerful voices, consistency of message, praise, and self-promotion (see table 4-5). This meant using top leadership as spokespeople, who repeated their department or agency message. It also meant advertising cooperative conservation by praising those who engage in cooperative conservation, touting success as a means to get others interested and involved.

Table 4-5 Framing techniques used in federal organization's news releases

<b>Powerful Voices</b>	<b>Consistency of Message</b>	<b>Praise</b>	<b>Self-promotion</b>
Cabinet Secretaries Administrators	Repetition and the Party Line	Projects	See What We Did!
Assistant Administrators	Variations on a Theme	Partners	
Deputies and Undersecretaries		Individuals	

### **Powerful voices**

To convey their message departments and the EPA used primarily top spokespeople for their news releases: cabinet secretaries, undersecretaries, deputy secretaries, the EPA administrator, assistant administrators, and references to the President. The lowest-level bureaucrats quoted include department bureau heads, regional administrators, regional directors,

and deputy undersecretaries. One particular voice that was seldom heard, but referred to often, was President George W. Bush. Spokespeople referred to the president or “the administration’s” commitment to cooperative conservation. Cabinet members and their teams consistently referred to the administration’s goals, environmental efforts, and their actions in support of cooperative conservation. Another high-level voice present in the news releases was that of the chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, James Connaughton. Like the cabinet members who were quoted, Connaughton also advocated the Bush administration philosophy of cooperative conservation as a tool for restoring America’s natural resources, saving the resource for the next generation, and who saw Americans as environmental stewards. In 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening session on cooperative conservation*, July 12), Connaughton said that:

America possesses a bounty of both public and private natural resources and landscapes that sustain and enrich us. The conservation opportunity of the next generation requires continued innovation in how we design policy and implement action across agencies, across levels of government, and across communities. I look forward to this next step in carrying out the President’s vision of a nation of stewards working together to accomplish effective meaningful results.

### **Consistency of message**

Messages can be broken down into two categories: repetition of the party line and variations on a theme. All departments and EPA had consistent language they used in their news releases from repetition of boiler-plate language to variations on the theme of cooperative conservation. Cooperative conservation required the consistent call to action by the larger “We” of the nation because cooperative conservation was the way to make progress and find solutions in an inclusive manner.

## **Department of Commerce–National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the party line**

Examples of the party line comes from the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Their news releases tended to used a drag and drop template with standard sentences found in most of the news releases that stated: "We are particularly proud of the success we've achieved through cooperative conservation that leverages the skills expertise in and local knowledge of our partners through NOAA's (fill in the blank) Program." News releases announcing results or successes used standard boilerplate language: "This public-private partnership improves our understanding of the environment and supports NOAA and the Bush administration's efforts to strengthen outreach, cooperative conservation and education initiatives." When grants were announced, most releases contained the following boiler-plate language: "NOAA and the Bush Administration are working to improve the understanding of our environment and to strengthen regional initiative. NOAA works with the Council, local governments as well as the academic and scientific communities on initiatives such as fishery management plan development in an effort to promote cooperative conservation." Such quotes were almost always attributed to retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA administrator. Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, was the voice quoted on grants to Gulf of Mexico states after Hurricane Ivan.

## **The Department of the Interior**

The Department of the Interior used variations of the themes: repeating the importance of citizen-stewards (stakeholders) having a place at the table and the valuable role of cooperative conservation in protecting endangered or at-risk species. One such example is the Vaughan Conservation Pipeline Project being awarded the Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative

Conservation Award “in recognition of the outstanding cooperation and efforts to conserve endangered species while protecting project resources in support of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of the Interior’s missions” (*BLM joins national groups in wildlife work*, 2008, July 16). Ivory-billed woodpecker and bison were poster children for at-risk species in DOI news releases. Gale Norton called for the creation of a “Corridor of Hope” Cooperative Conservation plan to save the ivory-billed woodpecker (*Once-thought extinct, ivory-billed woodpecker rediscovered in Arkansas*, 2005, April 28), and Dirk Kempthorne invoked the bison when he announced that DOI will work with state, tribal, and agricultural interests to strengthen bison conservation efforts to help the nation’s iconic species recovery (*Kempthorne launches bison conservation initiative*, 2008, October 28). This matters because efforts to save species do not take place only on federal lands, but on private lands as well. Kempthorne also talked repeatedly about the importance of the recovery crediting system as a cooperative conservation tool for private landowners to use to conserve endangered species (*Kempthorne announces new conservation mechanism for threatened and endangered species*, 2008, July 31). “So many of our nation’s imperiled species live on nonfederal land, this system will make it easier for other federal agencies to reach out to the American people and work with landowner,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale F. Hall (*Secretary Kempthorne announces new conservation mechanism for threatened and endangered species*, 2008, July 31), another recognition that conservation requires the larger “we.”

Citizen-stewards were regularly called upon by Gale Norton, who promoted them as “our most effective conservationists” because “people working in partnership will help us ensure that we can pass along to our children and grandchildren a country that is as healthy and whole as the one we inherited” (*Partnerships in Georgia, North Carolina to receive coastal wetland grants to*

*protect wildlife and habitat*, 2004, October 27). Citizens are not merely stewards; they are empowered, and called upon to be an army of citizen stewards for cooperative conservation and the nation's natural resources. Citizen stewards that epitomized cooperative conservation were award winners, like former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and his late brother Morris Udall, who were singled out by DOI Secretary Norton and those who "understood the importance of public service" and whose "approach parallels my own vision of citizen stewardship and cooperative conservation" (*Members of congress, family and friend gather for opening ceremony of exhibit at Interior Department honoring Udall*, 2005, May 10).

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's citizen solutions and the U.S. Department of Agriculture money machine**

Citizen-centered conservation and grass-roots efforts were common themes in EPA news releases, with assertions that citizen-conservationists play an important role in conservation efforts (*Action plan to reduce nutrients in Mississippi River 31 states released*, 2008, June 16; *EPA provides \$9 million for watershed protection*, 2005, November 10). Cooperative efforts were also about innovation, and were a result of working together. News releases also singled out those projects that could be praised as exemplary because they provided "win-win" solutions financially as well as environmentally (*New EPA program saves dollars and makes sense*, 2006, June 12; *Clean Charles River effort celebrated for ten years of environmental progress*, 2005, May 31; *USDA provides \$10.7 million to restore protected wetland in Illinois*, 2005, February 18).

Almost every news release by USDA included references to funding: grants, initiatives, credit trading, or loans. USDA spoke consistently about funding opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and landowners, not simply for funding's sake, but to promote engagement in cooperative conservation efforts that would benefit natural resources. Habitat trading credits



were considered “a great way to restore, protect and promote conservation of lands that are home to endangered species,” according to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Arlen Lancaster (*USDA, DOI and AFWA sign habitat credit trading agreement*, 2007, April 13). Four million dollars for participation in the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program was extolled as a “partnership that brings federal, state and local resources together to restore wetlands, provide habitat for wildlife and improve water quality” (*Partnership between Minnesota and USDA will restore wetlands: \$4 million will help environmentally sensitive wetlands on more than 7,000 acres*, 2004, October 25). USDA was putting its money where its mouth was where cooperative conservation was concerned.

## **Praise**

Often and effusive was the praise from all but the Defense department and EPA regarding cooperative conservation projects, MOUs, and participants in collaborative efforts, as well as positive outcomes. “Great day for endangered fish in Grand Valley as community celebrates completion of capital projects” call out the headline of a July 1, 2008 DOI – USFWS news release where DOI Deputy Secretary, Lynn Scarlet and Bureau of Reclamation Deputy Secretary Kris Polly praised the project, project participants, and the community. USDA provided praise for a “unique project with the [Nature] Conservancy is a prime example of President Bush’s cooperative conservation initiative that is needed to continue achieving our national conservation objectives (*USDA provides \$10.7 million to restore and protect wetlands in Illinois*, Johanns, 2005, February 18). Projects and individuals that won cooperative conservation awards were commended for “going beyond the decision to serve” and for creating “win-win situation for partners as well as the environment,” according to the DOI news release on the 2005 Cooperative Conservation Awards. Benjamin Grumbles, Assistant Administrator for EPA, recognized the

Clean Charles as “a shining example of cooperative conservation and urban river restoration for the rest of America” (*Clean Charles River effort celebrated for ten years of environmental progress*, 2005, May 31). Not to be left out, NOAA recognized the Calais Observatory with the first Preservation Partnership disk. The disks are “intended to promote public-private partnerships, which brought public attention to the importance of preserving the nation’s natural resources and historic sites” (*NOAA gives Calais, Maine observatory the first Preservation Partnership disk: commemorative marker promotes conservation of nation’s heritage*, 2005, July 1). The commemorative disk was recognized as “a symbol of a successful public-private partnership between NOAA and the Maine community,” according to Charlie Challstrom, the director of NOAA’s National Geodetic Survey.

### **Self-promotion/project-promotion**

Credit may be infinitely divisible, but self-promotion evens the odds of recognition. All the agencies engaged cooperative conservation or collaborative efforts acknowledged or proclaimed their roles in the projects or programs. The DOI’s--Bureau of Reclamation provided assurances from Kris Polly that:

Reclamation has examined each project from different perspectives, tested new idea, and have created state of the art solutions for endangered fish recovery. Today, with screens installed to prevent canal entrapment, fish can freely swim upstream with access to restored floodplain habitat. It is a success for endangered fish recovery in the Grand Valley.

(*Vaughan Pipeline receives Reclamation conservation award*, 2008, July 1).

And then there’s NOAA’s assertion that the organization itself is part of progress: “NOAA is excited to be a part of this historic collaboration and we look forward to working with all our partners in this important endeavor,” according to NOAA administrator Vice Admiral Lautenbacher. In other news releases, Lautenbacher talked about how a project or efforts “fits

into our model of ecosystem-based management, and promote local stewardship of the habitats that sustain our nation's fishery resources" (*NOAA awards \$54,824 to Georgia oyster habitat restoration*, 2005, June 24); "these habitat restoration efforts support NOAAs goals of \_\_\_\_\_" (*NOAA awards \$200,000 to restore salmon habitat in California*, 2005, May 31); or "NOAA has a long record of restoring and protecting natural conditions of our nation's coasts either through direct effort or through our strong partnership projects we have around the nation" (*NOAA awards more than \$1 million for community-based Marine Debris program*, 2006, September 22).

From the Department of Agriculture, then Secretary Mike Johanns, offered results from the actions of USDA: "I am pleased to demonstrate today that our conservation efforts are achieving tangible results--cleaner air and water, healthier soil and improved fish and wildlife habitat," (*Earth Day: Johanns reports wetlands initiative results: Healthy Forests Initiative advancing*, 2005, April 22). Not to be left out, EPA in one sentence from Alan Steinberg covers self promotion, money, the next generation, and saving a natural resource: "With nearly a million dollars in funds to be disbursed, we are delighted to provide the financial means to complete these valuable Futures Fund projects and help inspire a new generation to protect the wildlife and natural beauty of the Sound," (*Federal and state officials award grants to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound*, 2006, September 15).

## **Research Question Two**

*Are the cooperative conservation frames consistent among the federal organizations listed in E.O. 13,352 in their news release?*

Frames were consistent among the federal organizations. Three dominant frames emerged: the George W. Bush Administration charge to engage in cooperative conservation;

funding in support of cooperative conservation; and laudatory statements about cooperative conservation efforts. Often individual statements had elements of all three frames.

### **George W. Bush Supports Cooperative Conservation**

All of the entities spoke of the charge by President George W. Bush to engage citizens--be they landowners, farmers, ranchers, volunteers or private companies--or referred to support by the Administration in some way. Even before the executive order was signed, Gale Norton announced millions of dollars in grants; the DOI news release stated that “The department has awarded \$12.9 million in cost-share grants under President Bush’s Cooperative Conservation Initiative to complete 256 conservation projects in conjunction with states, local communities, businesses, landowners and other partners” (*Secretary Norton announces \$12.9 million in grants to support conservation in 40 states and Puerto Rico*, 2003, September 16). In the following years, the Bush administration commitment to cooperative conservation is still included in subsequent news releases, such as in this example: “The cooperative conservation effort has been buttressed by budget increase proposals by President Bush—many of which have been approved and funded by Congress—for conservation grants and other assistance to landowners, and to state, tribal and other government entities” (Norton, 2005, August 25). Both Ann Veneman and Mike Johanns, Department of Agriculture secretaries, invoked George Bush when discussing cooperative conservation. In 2004 (October 22, *Veneman announces release of \$1.6 billion for voluntary conservation programs on working lands*) Veneman said that the \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2005 funding was “another example of the Bush Administration’s commitment to providing the tools and resources that will help agriculture producers remain the best stewards of the land.” Similarly, Johanns talked about projects as “prime examples of President Bush’s cooperative

conservation initiative,” (*USDA provides \$10.7 million to restore wetlands in Illinois*, 2005, February 18) invoking the specter of the administration.

### **The Bush Administration Automatic Teller Machine**

Federal funding for cooperative conservation ranged from small amounts to billions, and underscored support by the Administration. Examples are found in the majority of the news releases, such as Lynn Scarlett’s statement that “this budget conveys more than simply numbers, it presents a vision to the people, ideas, energy, creativity and partnership at work on our landscapes, in our rivers and along our coasts” (*FY 2006 Interior budget emphasizes commitments, cooperative efforts, performance and fiscal restraints*, 2005, February 7). When NOAA awarded \$1.4 million to improve oyster resources in Louisiana, Bill Hogarth is quoted as saying, “NOAA and the Bush administration are committed to improving our understanding of the environment and supporting oyster recovery efforts in Louisiana” (*NOAA awards \$1.4 million to improve oyster resources in Louisiana*, 2005, February 7). NOAA and the Bush administration had a slightly greater commitment to oyster resources in Florida (*NOAA awards \$1.7 million to improve oyster resources in Florida*, 2005, February 7). EPA Assistant Administrator Benjamin Grumbles asserted that “the Targeted Watershed Grant Program is a great example of citizen centered conservation supported by President Bush” (*EPA awards \$5.5 million for Chesapeake Bay clean-up efforts*, 2006, October 12). The money frame was also consistently used by USDA from “grants to encourage partnerships” (*USDA provides up to \$1 million and requests proposals for Conservation Initiative Grants*, 2004, December 17) to \$38 million for cooperative conservation projects as “funding opportunities that are examples of the Bush Administration’s continuing commitment to encouraging cooperative conservation between

government and private partners” (*Conner announces \$38 million for cooperative conservation*, 2006, January 17).

### **Laudatory Statements**

Cooperative conservation was lauded, applauded, and praised. Like advertising to sell any product, repeated praise was used to promote the federal program by all the federal entities. According to Oscar Wilde, “Nothing succeeds like success.” Therefore espousing the success of cooperative conservation, should then lead to the program’s success. For example, USDA grant recipients were called “role models in showing how cooperative conservation is being used to accomplish regional, state, and local milestones toward pressing natural resource and rural priorities” (*USDA announces recipients of 2006 Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives grants*, 2006, May 25). People being honored for cooperative conservation efforts “made all of us proud,” said Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton (*Secretary of the Interior Norton confers special awards for cooperative conservation*, 2005, February 2). Vice Admiral Lautenbacher, Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, was quoted in 2006 saying, “We are particularly proud of the successes we’ve achieved through cooperative conservation that leverages the skills, expertise and local knowledge of our partners through NOAA Marine Debris Program” (*NOAA awards more than \$1 million for community-based Marine Debris Projects*, September 22).

### **Research Question Three**

*How do the nonfederal partners organizations: American Heritage Rivers, the Sonoran Institute, Chesapeake Bay Program, Blackfoot Challenge, Long Island Sound Study, the Wilderness Society, the Trust for Public Land, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, Sierra Club, Watch, National Fish Habitat Action Plan, NatureServe, and The Nature Conservancy, working*

*in partnership with the Departments of Defense, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency, listed in E.O. No. 13,352, frame cooperative conservation in their news releases?*

Unlike the federal entities responsible for carrying out cooperative conservation efforts, their partners were not as effusive about cooperative conservation. For the most part, cooperative conservation was not a focus of their news releases. Actually very few mentioned cooperative conservation at all--only seven organizations had actual frames relating to cooperative conservation (see table 4-7). The few news releases that did discuss cooperative conservation, or make reference to federal partnerships, framed cooperative conservation in terms of the conserving natural resources, money, exceptional examples, and recognition. Similar to federal news releases, some quotes addressed all the frames.

### **Conserving Natural Resources**

The resource included wetlands, coasts, reefs, plants, animals, terrestrial landscapes, cultures, and communities. Seeming to leave out no constituency who might benefit from, and enjoy the Illinois floodplain, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Nature Conservancy said:

Now through the partnership with NCRS we have an opportunity to make Emiquon [flood plain] more productive for fish, birds and all forms of wildlife, as well as hikers, fishers, bird watchers, hunters, photographers, historians, scientists and students. This will be a magnificent place that supports a vibrant economy, a higher quality of life and the long-term health of the nationally significant Illinois River.

—Steve McCormick, (2005, February 18) *The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resources Conservation formalize partnership; Emiquon restoration project to serve as key demonstration site.*

Another example is the, spokesman for The Trust for Public Land, who said:

Preservation of the San Miguel property is an incredible achievement by the Commonwealth. We are very pleased to be part of this project, and look forward to

continuing our work conserving land for people in Puerto Rico and throughout the Caribbean.

—Gregg Chelius, (2007, October 4) *Preservation of Puerto Rico beach saves turtle habitat*

Shifting focus to a river system and a culture, is the restoration of the Penobscot River, which is restoring the fisheries, and “will bring new life to the river, in turn revitalizing our cultural connections and strengthen our community,” according to Penobscot National Tribal Chief Kirk Francis (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awards \$450,000 to advance the Penobscot River restoration project*, 2007, August 31).

Providing grant money was considered an affirmation of the tremendous value of an environmental resource. Saving resources required commitment, and cooperators were proud of their commitments. “We are proud of our efforts in Maryland to restore the Chesapeake Bay through nutrient reduction, preserving nearly 70,000 acres of land and improvements in air quality” said Chesapeake Executive Council Chair and Maryland Governor, Robert Ehrlich (*Chesapeake Executive Council joins with partners to usher in new policies to protect bay forests, farms and waterways*, 2006, September 22). One of Ehrlich’s partners in the project, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams, said “The District of Columbia, which has long been known as the ‘City of Trees,’ is also proud to join our Chesapeake Bay Program partners in this regional approach” (*Chesapeake Executive Council joins with partners to usher in new policies to protect bay forests, farms and waterways*, 2006, September 22).

## **Money**

Like the press releases issued by federal agencies, money was a significant frame in the nonfederal organizations’ news releases. Money was an expression of support philosophically as well as fiscally. “With this grant, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confirms the tremendous



value of reconnecting the Penobscot River, the Gulf of Maine and estuary,” said Laura Rose Day of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invests nearly \$1 million to restore the Penobscot River ecosystem*, 2007, January 25). In a later news release, Day said that, “With this grant, NOAA confirms the tremendous value of restoring the river’s natural functions and reconnecting the Penobscot River to the sea” (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awards \$450,000 to advance the Penobscot River Restoration Project*, 2007, August 31). Praise for the Long Island Sound Study bridged the gap between the money and the exceptional example frames. “This grant, under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund Program, is a perfect example of how the maximum opportunity to target environmental actions can be gained through cooperation of agencies and the pooling of resources,” according to Acting EPA Regional Administrator Kathleen Callahan (*Federal and state officials award grants to restore health and living resources of Long Island Sound*, 2005, May 12).

### **Exceptional Examples**

Cooperative conservation projects and the partners are never average, in federal or nonfederal news releases. They are “unprecedented collaborations” (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Awards \$450,000 to advance the Penobscot River Restoration project*, 2007, August 31) or tremendous examples “of the importance of local, state, and federal officials working together for the common goal of permanently protecting critical habitat,” according to U.S. Senator John Sununu, a self-proclaimed supporter of the Coastal and Estuarine Land Protections Program funding (*Isinglass River conservation initiative completed*, 2008, August 28). They are shining examples according to U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe who was recognized for her efforts to obtain funding for dam removal on the Penobscot River. Snowe called the Penobscot River Restoration Project “yet another shining example of dam removal to

restore Atlantic salmon to Maine waters through consensus rather than litigation (*Senators Snowe, Collins secure \$1 million for Penobscot River restoration*, 2004, December 9).

### **Recognition and Naming Names**

Recognition was in the form of expressing thanks, identifying partners, and giving thanks to those who provided funding. The Trust for Public Land project manager Gregg Caporossi (*Isinglass River conservation initiative completed*, 2008, August 28) expressed excitement about an agreement to conserve 868 acres of land:

It's an exciting day to celebrate the success of this ambitious effort to protect the Isinglass River. It's good for the environment, for wildlife, and for the people who want to hike, fish, and otherwise enjoy the natural beauty of this river. TPL wishes to thank the Town, the New Hampshire Delegation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), all our project partners, and the many donors who made it possible.

Luther Propst of the Sonoran Institute recognized its partners by saying, “We are fortunate to have this partnership between landowners, the Park Service, Congress and the community to make protection of these 583 acres a reality. This fits into our vision for growth” (*Saguaro National Park expansion bill introduced by chairman of national parks subcommittee*, 2007, February 1). Thanks were not only expressed to partners for their participation, but also for funds to support projects. “We are grateful for these funds and committed to working with the Senators and federal fisheries officials to use these funds to best achieve the goals of river restoration” (Day, 2004, December 9).

### **Research Question Four**

*Are the cooperative conservation frames consistent among the federal organizations listed in E.O. 13,352 and their nonfederal partners in their news releases?*

Two dominant frames were consistent in both federal and nonfederal partners' news releases. These were “money” and “exceptional examples.” Money was not simply a resource to

accomplish stated objectives, but also a tacit expression of support. This was the case for Chesapeake Bay restoration (*EPA awards \$5.5 million for Chesapeake Bay clean-up efforts*, 2006, October 12) and as a form of encouragement for partnerships (*USDA provides up to \$1 million and requests proposals for Conservation Program Initiative grants*, 2004, December 17). Those receiving money were always appreciative, such as Laura Rose Day of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (*Senators Snowe, Collins secure \$1 million for Penobscot River restoration*, 2004, December 9; *Private donors invest \$10 million for Penobscot River restoration*, 2007, November 20). Day also asserted that providing funds demonstrated the value of the natural resource. Others receiving funds such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) felt privileged. Tom Kelsch, the NFWF Director, said the “foundation is honored to have been chosen to administer this critically important program” after the announcement of being awarded \$5.5 million from EPA for water-quality restoration projects. Tom Franklin of The Wildlife Society, referring to an MOU that allows for the transfer of funds in support of sage grouse research and information said, “The Wildlife society is excited to renew and expand our partnership to enhance the scientific capabilities of BLM wildlife professionals” (*BLM joins national groups in wildlife work*, 2005, March 16).

Those on the giving side of the funding relationship said grants promoted partnerships and demonstrated a commitment to cooperative conservation. Gale Norton, in referring to \$25 million in grants, said, “thanks to an unprecedented commitment to cooperative conservation in his [President Bush] budget, the department has been able to empower states, tribes, local communities, private landowners, and others to undertake innovative conservation projects to restore our land and recover its wildlife.” This is a similar sentiment expressed by EPA Assistant Administrator Benjamin Grumbles, who said that funding expresses Bush

Administration support to foster innovation to accelerate restoration of watersheds--such as the Chesapeake Bay (*EPA awards \$5.5 million for Chesapeake Bay clean-up effort*, 2006, October 12). Other statements bridge the money and the value of the resource frames. Encouraging the sound health of an ecosystem or iconic species made it worthy of appearing on the nation's agenda. EPA Region 2 Administrator Alan Steinberg said, "Keeping the [Long Island] Sound in sound health should remain at the top of everyone's agenda. With nearly a million dollars in funds to be disbursed, we are delighted to provide financial means to complete these Valuable Futures Fund projects to help inspire a new generation to protect the wildlife and natural beauty of the Sound" (*Federal and state officials award grants to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound*, 2006, September 15).

**Framing Techniques Used.** The nongovernmental groups, like the federal organizations, also used praise as a framing technique, and combined it with expressions of appreciation and gratitude. Praise was for those who helped them obtain funding for their research. There was effusive praise for the Maine Congressional delegation and NOAA administrators in securing and granting funds for the Penobscot River Restoration. In January 2007, there was expressed praise over the efforts to obtain funding for the project by the Penobscot Nation Chief and the head of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awards \$450,000 to advance the Penobscot River restoration project*, 2007, January 26), and in December, there was praise for the efforts in getting the commitment from NOAA to provide \$10 million dollars for work (*Penobscot River restoration project makes significant breakthrough-Congress and NOAA commit \$10 million*, 2007, December 21). There was also praise of the federal partners, such as the USDA NRCS, for the establishment of a memorandum of understanding creating a partnership between The

Nature Conservancy and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (*The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resource Conservation Service formalize partnership; Emiquon restoration project to serve as key demonstration site*, 2005, February 18).

### **Research Question Five**

*Can frames found in examined newspaper articles about cooperative conservation be linked to specific news releases issued by the federal or nongovernmental organizations?*

Examination data showed that only nine of the news releases could be directly connected to 19 of the 179 newspaper articles (see table 4-6). News releases listed in the left column of Table 4-6 could be the sources for the news stories in the right column. Twenty-nine of the newspaper items were editorials, opinion pieces, commentary, or letters to the editor, which were excluded from the pool of potential news stories to link to back to news releases. This left 150 news stories for comparison with 173 news releases based on date, sources quoted, quotes, and frames. A subject that generated seven news stories but no related news release yet appeared in the news release data set was the resignation of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. News stories about her tenure did include frames on cooperative conservation that included shared responsibility as a positive “we” (Kohler, 2007, March 27) and shared responsibility as the government passing the buck to the public (Heilprin, 2006, March 11), and harsh criticism of her leadership unrelated to cooperative conservation.

A news release that can be linked to ten news stories was the 2005 White House conference on cooperative conservation (*Interior leader to promote new environmentalism White House conference on cooperative conservation*, 2005, August 15). This news release identified leaders from DOI that would be participating, as well as other Bush Administration Cabinet members and Agency leaders for possible reporter follow-up. Reporters might have used this

news release to follow-up and develop stories, or used news releases not included in the research set such as those issued by The White House, the Council on Environmental Quality, or conference participants. It is also possible that a participating Department news release was used as the basis for the news stories, but the news release was not revealed in the data search.

News articles of outcomes of listening sessions held by Cabinet members or their designees across the country can be linked to three news releases included in the research. Thirty four listening sessions on cooperative conservation were held across the country from Spokane, Washington to Orlando, Florida and locations in between in 2006 and 2007. News releases in the data set include those issued by EPA, DOI, and a joint release by DOI, EPA, USDA, Executive Office of the President and the Department of Commerce. These news releases listed dates and locations of listening sessions over the course of a month. Media advisories that announced the listening sessions, which could have resulted in news stories, were not included in the research.

Three news releases dated July 28, 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announced first eight listening sessions on cooperative conservation*), July 31, 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announced first eight listening sessions on cooperative conservation*), and August 22, 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announce next series of listening sessions on cooperative conservation*) included the dates of listening sessions, and any of these could have been used as the basis for news releases written about the listening sessions that took place between August 9, 2006 and September 27, 2006. Four or five news stories can be linked to that release. Why four or five possible news release choices? Because the reporter who covered the event could have used one of those news releases as a starting point

for his story, and even earlier news release dated July 12, 2006 (*Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announce next series of listening sessions on cooperative conservation*) issued by the Department of the Interior or a media advisory issued two days before the listening session in his town of Spokane, Washington.

Quotes and frames from a news release on the once-thought extinct Ivory-billed woodpecker emerged in three news stories. The stories used quotes and frames from the news release including one from Gale Norton regarding the potential to find the Ivory-billed woodpecker as a “rare second chance to preserve through cooperative conservation what was once thought lost forever” (*Once-thought extinct, Ivory-billed woodpecker rediscovers in Arkansas*, 2005, April 28). The above quote and the frame of resource commitment were printed in a news story that ran three months after the news release originated.

One other news release could be linked to a specific news story, that of being the commendation of Wal-Mart by Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. It included the Secretary’s direct quote which included frames of money for the resource, and recognition of corporate citizenship on the part of Wal-Mart. However the focus of the story was Wal-Mart and the union, Norton’s laudatory frame praising Wal-Mart was included in the story. Although links existed between some news releases and some news stories, whether the news releases led to the news stories could not be determined.

Table 4-6. News releases and linked news stories

News releases	Linked news stories
<p><i>Interior leaders to promote new environmentalism at White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation.</i> 2005, August 15, issued by, DOI</p> <p>EPA set to co-host White House conference on cooperative conservation-Administrator Johnson to lead agency delegation. 2005, August 15. Issued by EPA</p>	<p><i>Conference stresses cooperation, not confrontation.</i> 2005, August 21. The Associated Press</p> <p><i>Millions of idled acres getting another look, Some ag groups want farmland taken out of the Conservation Reserve Program. CRP acreage.</i> 2005, August 26. Omaha World-Herald.</p> <p><i>*Bush Administration encourages its agencies to find partners for 'cooperative conservation.'</i> 2005, August 28, The Associated Press</p> <p><i>Rumsfeld says military, environmental concerns must be balanced.</i> 2005, August 29. The Associated Press.</p> <p><i>Administration urges cooperation on environmental disputes.</i> 2005, August 30. The Tribune.</p> <p><i>Cooperate on environment, U.S.</i> 2005, August 30. St. Louis Post-Dispatch.</p> <p><i>Conservation program extended U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns says re-enrollment contracts will be offered for the land that provides the highest level of environmental benefit.</i> 2005, August 30. Omaha World-Herald.</p> <p><i>Cooperative Conservation.</i> 2005, September 18. Las Vegas Review-Journal.</p> <p><i>Boulevard of believers.</i> 2005, October 11. Pioneer Press</p>
<p><i>Once-thought extinct, Ivory-billed woodpecker rediscovered in Arkansas.</i> 2005, April 28, issued by, DOI</p>	<p><i>*Decatur native helps discover ivory-billed woodpecker.</i> 2005, April 29. The Associate Press</p> <p><i>*Arkansas game and fish report.</i> 2005, May 11. The Associated Press.</p> <p><i>Agency offers funds to protect ivory-billed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's \$800,000 available to private landowners.</i> 2005, August 6. Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.</p>
<p><i>Norton commends national fish and wildlife foundation, Wal-Mart for landmark partnership to protect wildlife habitat.</i> 2005, April 12. Issued by DOI</p>	<p><i>*Analysis: Wal-Mart and the 'union project.'</i> 2005, April 13. United Press International.</p>
<p><i>Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening sessions on cooperative conservation.</i> 2006, July 12 Issued by EPA</p> <p><i>Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality to hold listening sessions on cooperative conservation.</i> 2006, July 12 Issued by DOI</p>	<p><i>Feds asking for public's thoughts on 'cooperative conservation.'</i> 2006, August 8. The Associated Press</p>
<p><i>Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announced first eight listening sessions on cooperative conservation.</i> July 28, 2006. Issued by EPA</p> <p><i>Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announced first eight listening sessions on cooperative conservation.</i> July 31, 2006. Issued by DOI. EPA. USDA. The White House &amp; Commerce Department.</p>	<p><i>Meeting on Bush enviro proposal draws disparate views.</i> 2006, August 10, The Associated Press</p> <p><i>Kempthorne gets earful in visit to improves conservation cooperation.</i> 2006, August 10, Spokesman Review.</p>
<p><i>Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, EPA, Council on Environmental Quality announce next series of listening sessions on cooperative conservation.</i> 2006, August 22. Issued by EPA.</p>	<p><i>*U.S. secretary of interior plans session in Brewer; Kempthorne seeks feedback on 'listening' tour.</i> 2006, September 19. Bangor Daily News.</p> <p><i>Interior secretary hears pleas of Mainers; Conservation needs outlined in Brewer.</i> 2006, September 21. Bangor Daily News</p> <p><i>They had his ear.</i> 2006, September 29. The Press Enterprise.</p>
<p>(*) indicates direct quote from press release</p>	



### **Research Question Six**

*Over time have the frames changed or remained consistent in the news releases and news stories?*

Over time the frames have remained fairly consistent among federal organizations' news releases (see table 4-7). Nonfederal partners produced so few news releases that emergent frames are based in some cases on one news release produced during a calendar year. The frames that did emerge were consistent overall and were money, commitment to the resource, and shared responsibility (see table 4-8). News stories have had consistent emergent frames about cooperative conservation (see table 4-9) over time.

A frame that remained consistent in federal news releases over time was money. Money for the natural resource, money for the partners, money that yielded results were common frames. Shared responsibility among federal organizations and their nonfederal partners was a consistent frame over time. Sharing the responsibility led to success through partnerships; and that sharing responsibility meant empowering people to become an army of citizen stewards.

Table 4-7. Cooperative conservation frames in federal news releases over time

Year / Org	Department of Commerce--NOAA	Department of the Interior	Department of Agriculture	Environmental Protection Agency
2004	Money	Commitment to resource/ Money	Money	---
2005	Money/ Bush administration support	Responsibility - Empower citizen stewards/ Good examples	Money/Bush Admin support	Money/ Cooperative conservation as tool
2006	Success through partnership	Responsibility - Empower citizen stewards/Money	Money/ Cooperative conservation for success	Responsibility
2007	Commitment to resource	Responsibility - Environmental Stewards	Partnership / Money	Money
2008	Commitment to resource	Responsibility /Praise	Cooperation	Money
2009	Praise	---	---	---

Table 4-8 Cooperative conservation frames in nonfederal news releases

Year/ Organization	Trust for Public Land	Long Island Sound Study	Sonoran Institute	Chesapeake Bay Program	Penobscot River Restoration Trust	The Nature Conservancy	Blackfoot Challenge
2004	--	--	--	--	Money/ commitment to resource	--	--
2005	--	Money / Shared responsibility	--	Praise	--	Resource investment	Grass-roots public conservation
2006	--	Shared responsibility	--	Responsibility shared	--	--	-
2007	Value of resource / money	--	Shared responsibility	Responsibility shared	Money/ commitment to resource	Money	--
2008	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2009	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

## Newspaper Frames

Frames were fairly consistent over time in news stories. Responsibility for cooperative conservation that is shared by all was expressed every year, with praise being the dominant technique for conveying that message. Money was more prominent in some years more than others, and success was dominant approximately three years after the executive order was signed.

Table 4-9. Dominant cooperative conservation frames in news stories over time

Year/ Frame	Primary emergent frame	Secondary emergent frame	Framing techniques
2004	Responsibility	Money	Praise
2005	Responsibility Shared	Conflict	Praise / Repetition
2006	Responsibility shared	Money	Praise / Criticism
2007	Success/Models/Results	Responsibility shared	Praise
2008	Shared responsibility	Success	Praise
2009	-	-	-

## Responsibility frame

During World War II, Uncle Sam declared “I want you!” In newspaper items the frame of responsibility similarly expressed the desire to share the conservation load with the nation, an eager army of motivated citizens to take on the challenge of conservation with a variety of partners. Subframes in the newspaper articles with the responsibility frame included: sharing the responsibility of conservation beyond the federal government; and the shirking of responsibility by the federal government. Federal entities were considered by some to be literally passing the financial buck to landowners, ranchers and private companies.

**Responsibility shared.** David L. Nunes, CEO of Pope Resources was quoted in *The Chronicle* (Sale announced of forestland near national park, 2006, September 26) extolling the virtues of a cooperative conservation transaction, there is responsibility and assumption of fiscal responsibility by his company.

We have a responsibility to deliver economic returns to our investor owners, and in this case we were able to balance that objective with recognition of other important values, such as protection of wildlife habitat, view corridors, and water quality.

“We” implies the larger group of the nation’s citizens, which was a perspective expressed repeatedly by spokespeople from federal organizations such as the White House Council on Environmental Quality (Harper, 2007, October 9), the Department of the Interior (Norton, 2005, August 25; Eilperin, 2004, October 26; Kohler, J. 2006, March, 3), The Environmental Protection Agency (Bryan, 2008, December 8; Heilprin, 2005, August 28), Department of Defense (Leiser, 2005, August 30), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Moore, 2005, May 5; Durbin, 2006 April 19; Edgecomb, 2004, August 27). From the White House, George W. Bush led the call for ranchers, farmers, tribes, citizens and nongovernmental organizations to partner on conservation issues with the federal government (Pfeiffer, 2006 March 11; Pickler, 2005, April 22; Young, 2005, September 18). Sharing the responsibility included reaching out to sportsman (Whaley, S. 2008, October 4) and farmers as stewards (Garofolo, 2008, May 15), while paying attention to environmental resources for the next generation (Rogers, 2007, October 8). That meant focusing on salmon and salmon habitat health (Miller, 2008, September 3), and the nation’s symbol--the bald eagle (Krupp, 2005, April 4). Cooperative conservation also called for unlikely allies like the military and environmentalists (Godvin, T. 2006, April 25; Carlton 2007, January 24) to work on conservation goals.

**Responsibility – shirked.** While the federal government called citizens to own the cause of cooperative conservation because they could not do it alone, some felt cooperative conservation was simply another way to pass the buck. In *The Washington Post*, an article by Juliet Eilperin, (2004, October 26) quotes Lynn Scarlett, then Assistant Secretary of the Interior for policy, management and budget, asserted that the Bush administration had “restored 1.7

million acres of wetlands and uplands since 2001.” In the same article Daniel Esty, a senior EPA official under President George H.W. Bush, said the “George W. Bush administration has walked away from environmental protection at the level that was advanced by president of both parties in the past.” Another skeptic is Wesley Warren, director of programs at the Natural Resources Defense Council who said cooperative conservation is “just another name for voluntary partnerships. It would be like saying we’re going to rely on voluntary baggage screening to provide airport security. It’s good as far as it goes, but it’s not enough” (Eilperin, 2004, October 26). Private landowners being asked to employ cooperative conservation partnerships, unlike the federal government were said to be the only one taking risks. Washington state Representative Joel Kretz said it was “paramount for private property rights to be protected from bureaucrats and special interests (Geranios, 2006 August 10).

Sometimes unlikely alliances formed with tentative steps forward and wholehearted commitments. Earl “Buddy” Hance, president of the Maryland Farm Bureau, a partner in the Chesapeake Bay restoration summed up the tentative relationship with federal partners in *The Washington Post* as “just dating, we’re not going steady” (Kunkle, 2005, September 21). Yet others formed unique partnerships, like the one in Hawaii, considered to be an act of *malama aina*—caring for the land, which joined together The Trust for Public Land, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, The U.S. Army, the National Audubon Society, City and County of Honolulu (Godvin, 2006, April 25). This “odd pairing” formed between the U.S. Army and The Trust for Public Land when in 2007, the two joined forces to acquire lands in Virginia around Fort A.P. Hill. Joshua Stanboro of The Trust for Public Land said “The last people I ever expected to be working with were the guys in the black berets and camouflage uniforms. Now I count them as friends” (Carlton, 2007, January 24).

## **Success Frame**

The success frame is defined as achieving goals or getting results. Advertising the success of cooperative conservation projects, relationships, and results is one way to invite attention, interest and the investment in cooperative conservation opportunities. Federal and nonfederal entities both talked about examples of cooperative conservation as if it was one of the best tools created for conservation. News writers conveyed these messages to readers across the country as models, prime examples and results.

## **Models & prime examples**

Terms such as “incredible example” (Lee, S. 2005, August 21), “cream of the crop” (Clayton, 2005, September 10), and a “standard to emulate” (Swanson, 2005, April 13) were used to describe cooperative conservation projects. The Blackfoot Challenge coalition (*Kemphorne praises conservation coalition*, 2006 October 11; Newhouse, 2006, October 11) was lauded by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne as the “finest example” of cooperative conservation; a model to be taken back to Washington, D.C. as a good model. A “shining example” toward restoring Atlantic salmon was the description of Gale Norton; and a project of national significance was the way both Senator Susan Collins of Maine, and Representative Tom Allen of Maine described the Penobscot River restoration project (Hauger, 2007, January 27). Such descriptions were used to frame cooperative conservation as “the” tool or method to use to in conservation efforts.

## **Results**

Success meant building relationships and making significant achievements like the Nisqually watershed transaction in 2006 that yielded a “win-win” outcome for both conservation and industry interests by allowing the habitat to be protected in perpetuity (*Sale announced of*

*forestland near national park*, 2006, September 26). On an individual level, an Iowa farmer who shared his success story of a small project growing into a statewide initiative (Clayton, 2005, September 10). According to Dale Hall, then Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, “The Nature Conservancy’s efforts to preserve wildlife habitats in Montana shows how cooperative conservation is producing real results on the ground” (Newhouse, 2006, October 11). Success also meant results for species, which included enhancement of bull trout and grizzly bear populations (Jamison, 2006, October 14). One of most powerful attributions of success due to cooperative conservation is the story of the bald eagle being removed from the endangered species list. Dale Hall, then Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said:

It’s fitting that our national symbol becomes a symbol of the great things that happen through cooperative conservation. Eagles could not have recovered without a support network for strong partnerships among government at all levels, tribes, conservation organizations, the business community and individual citizens.

—Hall, *Interior secretary ‘impressed’ with coalition*

## **Conflict Frame**

Cooperative conservation was framed by federal organizations as a way to avoid conflict, but in the newspapers it was also seen as a means to undermine environmental laws, and pitted the military against the environment. Gale Norton said: “Environmentalism circa 1970 was all about conflict. It was a real struggle to set the direction of the country. I submit that cooperation and win-win solutions are more sustainable than alarmism on both sides or winner take all conflicts” (Young, 2005, September 18). Earlier in the year, when speaking to participants in the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, Gale Norton said “Some of you have been collaborating on environmental issues for years. You understand by experience the limits of conflict-oriented approaches to environmental problems and the possibilities that arise when people work together” (Leiser, 2005, August 30). Working together was framed as a better, if

not the best way to achieve environmental goals. In Texas it turned the “government from a sheriff into a partner” and such “collaboration and incentives offered to property owners will be a faster route to recovery than court battles” (Barringer, 2006, January 1).

While cooperative conservation was prominently touted as a significant conservation tool, practically a panacea by the George W. Bush administration, it was considered by some as a way to weaken or circumvent existing environmental laws. Michael Bean, a senior lawyer for Environmental Defense was, “skeptical of any contention that cooperative conservation is the only tool needed. I think they [G.W. Bush administration] want to emphasize that and de-emphasize the regulations” (Heilprin, 2005, August 28). Nicole Rosmarino of the WildEarth Guardians considered cooperative conservation measures to be a possible tool, but felt that using this tool was “gambling with the future of these species [prairie chicken and sand dune lizard]” (Bryan, 2008, December 8). Samantha Young, writing in *The Las Vegas Review-Journal* (2005, September 18) said that critics of cooperative conservation called it a way to bypass environmental regulation, and gut fundamental protections governing air pollution, clean water, and land management. “Greenwashing,” according to Dan Gear (Young, 2005, September 18), who said ‘what the administration tries to do on specific regional-based initiatives is far undercut by what he calls the broad attack on the nation’s environmental laws on clean air, water and land use.’ Combining conflict and money is the case of the City of Colton, home to the endangered Delhi Sands flower-loving fly. Because of this species Mayor Deirdre Bennett says restrictions on development in place to protect the fly’s habitat, have prevented the development of the city (Bowles, 2006, September 29). More federal funding is needed said speakers at a meeting attended by then Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, where the fly was discussed, to make agreements under ESA work, cooperatively.



Yet another aspect of conflict is the military's efforts to balance conservation with its mission. Then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld warned that procedures designed to protect the environment can be harmful to the troops (Wittenauer, C, 2005, August 29). Troops trained in Fort Irwin, California were in the habit of rolling their tent bottoms to keep them out of the way of desert tortoises, but when this was done in Iraq, it made the troops more visible and possibly more vulnerable to insurgents. Rumsfeld went on to describe Defense Department projects such as DoD work with conservationists which led to the resurgence of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker on U.S. Military bases in the southeastern United States. Another example of Defense Department conservation efforts is the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative, established in 2003 (Carlton, 2007, January 24) with the Pentagon working with environmentalists and local groups for land conservation deals around military bases across the country.

### **Money Frame**

Money was an emergent frame in newspaper items just as it was in federal news releases. The money frames would best be defined as funds or funding as it pertained to cooperative conservation. The money frame included indications of Bush Administration support; and the need for more money, which was not a subframe in federal news releases.

### **Money = administration support.**

"A \$2 million infusion from the federal government added to a proposed \$9 million in state funds would go a long way toward keeping Utah's rangelands, watershed and sage grouse populations healthy," said governor Jon Huntsman (Henetz, 2007 February 8). Money--an infusion, an investment, or simply put a commitment from the federal government. Regardless of it was described; money was considered an indication of administration support. The case of the

ivory-billed woodpecker garnered attention and funding when the species, which is considered extinct, was thought to have been sighted again in an Arkansas swamp. “With the ivory-billed woodpecker there is a rare second chance,” said Gale Norton. That second chance was backed up with \$800,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service available to private landowners who agreed to conserve habitat for the ivory-billed woodpecker (Marks, 2005, August 6). Senator Susan Collins of Maine praised the \$10 million in federal funds for the Penobscot River restoration (Huager, 2007 January 27), again an indication of support from the federal government. An even greater investment was the request in the President’s budget for \$61.5 million toward Forest Legacy Funds.

### **Money—Send More**

Even though funding in the form of appropriations, grants, initiatives and credits was a good thing, more money is better. Farmers have been called good stewards of the land, and helping them with more funding helps the land (Kunkle, 2005, September 21; Kind, 2007, January 7). During the cooperative conservation listening session in Spokane, Washington, Dirk Kempthorne was told by a participant that the federal government needs to provide incentives, i.e. dollars, for landowners to help conserve species, because otherwise they will not recover anything (Hagengruber, J. 2006, August 10). This need was reiterated by columnist Ron Kind, who in discussing the 2007 Farm Bill said that providing funding the bill through cooperative conservation agreements would help stretch local and state dollars further (Kind, 2007, January 7). In Oklahoma they were literally breaking ground thanks to the first Oklahoman to sign a contract to participate in the Conservation Enhancement Program, a \$20.6 million cooperative conservation project (Cunningham, 2007, November 11).

## Framing Techniques in Newspaper Articles

Framing techniques in news articles were similar to those found in press releases (see table 4-10). One framing technique that did not emerge in news releases, but did in news stories was criticism. No federal spokespeople are quoted criticizing anything related to cooperative conservation, or expressing skepticism. Federal and nonfederal spokespeople praised cooperative conservation efforts and partners, and calling attention to “win-win” situations. Federal spokespeople are quoted repeating statements of support for cooperative conservation and praising successes.

Table 4-10. Framing techniques used in newspaper articles

Criticism	Repetition	Cheering on the cause
	• Party line	• Praise
	• Praise	• Win-Win

### Criticism, skepticism and insults

George W. Bush’s environmental policies, of which cooperative conservation was one, evoked passionate responses. Senator James Jeffords said (Barringer, 2004, September 4):

I expect the Bush administration to continue to their assault on regulations designed to protect public health and the environment. I expect the Bush administration to continue underfunding compliance and enforcement activities. I expect the Bush administration will go down in history as the greatest disaster for public health and the environment in the history of the United States.

—Jeffords, *More landowners embrace Texas conservation plan; In an economic shift, ranchers adopt ecosystem program in return for incentives*

Less abusive was the statement from Carl Pope (Heilprin, 2004, August 27), who said the cooperative conservation executive order was “part of the ‘shrink-the-federal-safety-net efforts by the Bush administration. It’s another signal to federal agencies that they’re supposed to ignore enforcing the law and defer to local governments.” Painted with a broad brush is criticism of Gale Norton, and policies she represented, including cooperative conservation. Carl Pope executive director of the Sierra Club called her “an unpopular symbol of unpopular policies,”

(Rogers, 2006, March 11). Speaking directly to the topic of cooperative conservation, League of Conservation Voters president Deb Callahan, said Interior's conservation projects are "a nice little program, but it's a fig leaf in the context of the larger scheme of what we need to conserve in important public and private lands" (Eilperin, 2004 October 26). Dismissive language was another tool to frame cooperative conservation. Bill Beacom, a Missouri River captain who is "embroiled in the fight between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers" said cooperative conservation is a "nice concept" but "we're more familiar with confrontational conservation than cooperation" (Zaiger, 2006, August 29).

This was mild compared to the dismissive opinion piece by Angus Phillips in *The Washington Post* (2006, April 30). Phillips said "rarely have so many taken credit for so little," about the kick-off presentations on the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Lynn Scarlett, acting Secretary of the Interior and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez were greeted by "sycophantic minions," and they were only "missing pom-poms." Carlos Gutierrez "droned on," "big shots rolled in" and people "chowed down." Not enough to simply criticize the program as a waste of money, Phillips chose to insult the people representing it.

### **Repetition, cheerleading and praise**

Repetition of the party line could be found in a number of news stories and opinion pieces. Stories talked about "win-win" solutions, and praised those who engaged in cooperative conservation projects, programs or agreements. "No agency or group can do this alone" was familiar refrain from the Cabinet members and agency heads including the White House Council on Environmental Quality (Harper, 2009, October 9; Leiser, 2005 August 30; Miller, 2006, January 12). "Win-win" was almost like a cheer, motivating potential participants to become part of the winning team and cheering on those who have responded to the call, was repeated by

Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture in news stories (Bowen, 2004, December 19; Young, 2005, September 18; Kempthorne praises conservation coalition, 2006 October 11; Garofolo, 2008, May 15). Lastly was praise, recognizing models of behavior to be emulated by others. Private landowners, farmers, and industry were singled out for leading by example. Praise was not merely one way from federal voices, but also from organizations like The Nature Conservancy and the Penobscot River Restoration Trust on great examples partners provided for cooperative conservation (Chague, 2008 June 30; Marks, 2005, August 6; Kempthorne praises conservation coalition, 2006, October 11). Sportsmen were praised by Dick Cheney as those who “tend to be the best informed and most determined advocated for sensible wildlife and habitat conservation. You have proven that people who are closer to the land are usually the ones who do the most for the land” (Whaley, 2008 October 4).

### **Have the Frames Changed Over Time?**

Having identified the emergent frames and technique, the question of have the frames changed or remained consistent in the news releases and news stories can now be answered. A frame that remains consistent in federal news releases over time is money; money for the natural resource, money for the partners, money that yields results. Shared responsibility among federal organizations and their nonfederal partners continued to be an advocated position. Sharing the responsibility led to success through partnerships. Sharing responsibility meant empowering people to become an army of citizen conservationists.

Nonfederal partners produced so few news releases that emergent frames are based in some cases one news release during a calendar year. The frames that did emerge were consistent overall and were money, commitment to the resource, and shared responsibility. These were frames that emerged from federal news releases about cooperative conservation.

**Frame changes in news releases over time.** Frames have been fairly consistent over time in news stories. Responsibility for cooperative conservation that is shared by all was expressed every year, with praise being the dominant technique for conveying that message. Money was more prominent in some years more than others, and success was dominant approximately three years after the executive order was signed.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

This research set out to examine how cooperative conservation was framed by those engaged in it, both federal and nonfederal organizations. It examined news releases produced over time by federal and nonfederal organizations, and how the subject was framed in resulting newspaper stories over time. The research also examined if frame consistency existed among the federal organizations listed in E.O. 13,352. Last it examined if links existed between news releases and newspaper stories published over approximately a four-year period after the signing of the executive order.

What the research revealed was five-fold:

1. The required federal entities embraced the term cooperative conservation and took opportunities to consistently promote their involvement and support of collaborative conservation efforts on the state, regional and national scale and consistently framed it positively in their news releases.
2. Money and responsibility were dominant and consistent cooperative conservation frames over time in press releases.
3. Nonfederal entities did not independently promote cooperative conservation to the same degree as federal organizations.
4. Newspapers framed cooperative conservation consistently over time, and used frames found both in the federal news releases and outside of the federal news releases.
5. Some press releases could be linked to newspaper stories, but a direct relationship of the news release leading to the news story could not be confirmed.

## **Federal Press Releases and Into the News**

### **Owning the Term**

Federal organizations ordered by President George W. Bush to support cooperative conservation as a method and tool for engaging with partners primarily did so using the media as an to showcase their efforts, with the exception of the Department of Defense. The Defense Department had few news releases available for review; however Donald Rumsfeld was quoted in other federal news releases framing cooperative conservation in positive terms. When federal organizations framed cooperative conservation, there was consistency among them; their specific messages were tailored to each federal organization's mission. No organization stepped outside of its mission boundaries to promote cooperative conservation. Each adopted cooperative conservation frames, yet made them their own. Frames in federal news releases by organizations directed to cooperate in E.O. 13,352 were predominantly positive, presenting cooperative conservation as a useful tool that yielded success. Success came in the form of results, agreements and progress.

### **Money, responsibility and frame consistency**

Consistency of frames did exist over time among the federal organizations in their news releases. Organizations appeared to have been given talking points and ways to frame cooperative conservation, and they used them consistently in their news releases. Money and responsibility were dominant overlapping frames that were consistent over time by the federal organizations. In the movie *Field of Dreams*, Shoeless Joe Jackson says to the main character, "If you build it they will come." In the case of cooperative conservation, providing funding seemed to be a way to bring current and potential partners to the table by offering concrete incentives and returns on their investments in environmental conservation.



Money was also a consistent symbol of investment and commitment by the federal government in support of cooperative conservation. According to the federal government, responsibility was something to be shared by the federal government and the public. Providing funding was one way to demonstrate that the federal government was shouldering its responsibility in the area of environmental conservation. Money appeared to be the primary illustration of commitment with many millions of dollars available for landowners, ranchers and farmers across the country.

So if the promise of saving endangered species was not enough to entice landowners, there was the financial return for managing fisheries, protecting watersheds, and using conservation practices on farmland. This is not to imply that financial incentives are bad, but suggests that environmental conservation is itself fungible. In that context, environmental conservation has not only aesthetic value, but monetary value as well. According to their own news releases, federal organizations gave out over a billion dollars for programs, projects and partnerships that fell under the aegis of cooperative conservation.

Money appeared to be the main focus of news releases by NOAA and USDA, although all of the federal organizations included the money frame in some form in their news releases by referencing grants, credits or other funds available for cooperative conservation. The money frame was a powerful one, giving the impression that money was the most effective tool for engaging others in cooperative conservation. Grants, seed money and credits were all provided as ways to support and encourage cooperative conservation.

### **Framing other signs of support**

Other mechanisms to indicate federal commitment included memorandums of understanding, legislation, and technical support. These were not as prominent as financial

commitments to landowners, farmers, ranchers and other potential partners. Yet one aspect of the responsibility frame that could be entered into by anyone was the engagement of the ‘army of citizen conservationists.’ This framed cooperative conservation not as a top down program enforced by the federal government, but as a grass roots movement of individual citizens taking environmental conservation into their own hands. Citizens were called on to conserve the oceans, and combine scientific knowledge with passion and commitment. They were also identified as ‘our most effective conservationists’ by the Secretary of the Interior. To be sure not to exclude anyone, anglers, farmers, sportsmen and ranchers were identified as specific groups encouraged engaging in cooperative conservation. Whether or not this frame was adopted by citizens was not investigated in this research, but it did lead to insinuations by some that cooperative conservation was an opt-out for the federal government on environmental issues by passing responsibility on to citizens.

While the federal spokespeople cheered cooperative conservation as a way to share environmental responsibility, others, not federal spokespeople, saw it as a mechanism to undermine existing environmental laws. Specifically it was identified as a tool to weaken the Endangered Species Act of 1973. It was also said to be a way for the federal government to shirk environmental responsibility on conservation issues. Comments like those raise the possibility of cooperative conservation not being what it appeared to be.

### **“Shining examples” of “win-win” situations**

With programs, relationships and projects being framed repeatedly as “win-win” situations, “national models,” or “great examples” it would be hard not to consider applying cooperative conservation to any number of environmental problems. Federal news releases only framed programs, project and partnerships as “win-win,” so that “win-lose” or “lose-lose” was a

remote possibility, far from the success frame. Cooperative conservation was touted as a way to help find a long thought extinct woodpecker; and help a symbol of America, the bison, thrive again. If cooperative conservation failed or even faltered on those or other applications it was not revealed by federal organizations in their news releases.

### **The cooperative conservation Swiss Army Knife**

Cooperative conservation was framed as a powerful tool for environmental conservation. Much like a Swiss Army knife, it came with its own built in set of tools to get the job done—grants, credits, legislation, technical assistance, and powerful spokespeople. Army of citizen conservationists sold separately. As a multi-use tool it could be used by many—ranchers, farmers, anglers, landowners and corporations for many things. From oyster recovery in the Gulf of Mexico to partnerships in Calais, Maine, cooperative conservation was framed as the way to get it done. It was said to be the way to work with others: tribes, sporting groups, private land owners, and local communities to make great strides in conservation.

### **Framing Techniques**

#### **The message and the messengers**

Those involved in cooperative conservation were praised as role models and examples of excellence. Opportunities to tout success, or encourage the participation of others were taken by the highest levels of leadership. Field technicians or park rangers were not used to frame the issue; instead those who could garner national, regional and local attention from nonfederal partners, the media, and the public were the standard bearers. Sometimes “who” carries the message may be as important as the message itself. Cabinet members, undersecretaries, bureau and regional directors were the ones quoted in press releases and in the press, leading the charge

on cooperative conservation. They might even be described as prominent cheerleaders for the executive order.

Using spokespeople at that level implies that framing cooperative conservation was important to the Bush Administration because it used important federal leaders to publicize, promote and advance cooperative conservation as part of the president's environmental agenda. As a result cooperative conservation was framed solely in positive terms, by powerful voices in federal organizations. If cooperative conservation had a downside, it was not evident from the statements by federal spokespeople. No federal employees' voices were found in the research that negatively framed cooperative conservation.

One leadership voice often alluded to, yet rarely present in federal news releases was that of George W. Bush. Those quoted sometimes referred to being tasked by President Bush to encourage cooperative conservation. They consistently conveyed this message in press releases, and restated it at listening sessions across the country; and that message was picked up in newspaper stories. The President of the United States may be said to be one of, if not the, most influential voice in the nation. That cabinet members and other spokespeople would affiliate their messages with him signifies the importance of framing the cooperative conservation message with President Bush in the frame.

The few military spokespeople who were quoted in federal news releases not only framed the issue of cooperative conservation positively, but also as something that must work in concert with military readiness and safety for soldiers. Nonfederal partners of the U.S. military called the Army an "unlikely ally." This positively frames a group of individuals that is perhaps not commonly considered to be environmentalists.

## Other framing techniques

*“You must intensify and render continuous by repeatedly presenting with suggestive ideas and mental pictures of the feast of good things, and the flowing fountain, which awaits the successful achievement or attainment of the desires,”* Robert Collier, early self help author.

Other framing techniques used to convey the cooperative conservation message in the federal news releases were praise and repetition. The value, success and results of cooperative conservation were repeatedly presented as a good thing by federal spokespeople. It was a tool, a mechanism, a way to achieve success and results. In essence it was a “feast of good things” for those who adopted cooperative conservation as a way to reach their environmental conservation goals. Another way to offer praise, and praise success, was the national platform given to cooperative conservation award winners by the Department of the Interior at its annual cooperative conservation awards ceremony. This ceremony generated Department level news releases about each award winner.

The techniques of praise and repetition also applied to self promotion among the federal organizations. Federal organizations named in the executive order took opportunities to point out that they were themselves, actively involved in cooperative conservation with not only nonfederal partners, but with other federal organizations as well. This allowed them to gain recognition for their efforts in the media, by the public, and from the Bush administration for following the executive order. With press release headlines that included the department secretary’s name or the organization in the title, it could be said that the organizations were taking the opportunity to engage in self promotion regarding the cooperative conservation effort.

**Message repetition.** Over and over partners were praised, success declared and seemingly all things cooperative conservation were win-win examples to be held up as a model. Success stories were told repeatedly by powerful voices, and all things seemed worthy of praise.

If saying something repeatedly made something true, then cooperative conservation was a success and all partners deserved adulation for their efforts to conserve land, water, flora and fauna.

## **Nonfederal Organizations News Releases**

### **Limited voices**

Nonfederal organizations had a limited voice in cooperative conservation either by choice, chance or circumstance. Not all of the partners identified in the research even produced news releases as was seen in the results (see table 4-8). The very small number of news releases by the nonfederal partners on the topic of cooperative conservation can indicate any number of things. It might mean they had limited staff to produce news releases, or there was a lack of interest in embracing a term developed by the federal government for a type of relationship that in some cases had been in effect for years. This research cannot identify which of these or if something else is the reason for the lack of cooperative conservation news releases by nonfederal partners. When quoted in federal releases, nongovernmental spokespeople had positive comments, and there are those organizations such as the Blackfoot Challenge and Phalen Corridor that were selected for national recognition for their cooperative conservation efforts.

### **Who owns cooperative conservation?**

Such a limited number of news releases by nonfederal partners seems to indicate that cooperative conservation was truly a federal government program, led, framed and in essence “owned” by the federal government. The order to engage in cooperative conservation was a federal one issued by the president. Federal organizations were “tasked” with the responsibility for implementing cooperative conservation programs. The responsibility to engage in cooperative conservation was not that of nonfederal partners who were not held accountable for

it, but that of federal organizations identified in the executive order. Federal organizations were also the ones that held and distributed funding to encourage and engage others to participate in cooperative conservation efforts. Given that whether or not cooperative conservation succeeded or failed was not their responsibility, nonfederal organizations did not have to participate in it, comment on it in the media, or write news releases about it.

### **Framing in Nonfederal News Releases**

What nonfederal releases did reveal, were the frames of conservation of natural resources, money and exceptional examples. The natural resources were not just the land, water and wildlife but also about culture and the way of life for some. But conservation of the resource was not free. Dams were bought by the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, and the USDA provided funds to conserve lands in Illinois. Money for nonfederal partners was similarly framed as it was in federal releases—money meant a commitment. Federal organizations were said to be “confirming” their commitment to, or the value of, a natural resource. In these cases, the federal government it could be said owned up to its shared conservation responsibility with its nonfederal partners. Nonfederal partners also identified exceptional examples of cooperative conservation. This was not as common as in federal news releases, but the frame did exist.

Nonfederal agencies also used some powerful voices as well in their news releases such as U.S. senators and representatives, NGO presidents, and in some cases Indian nation chiefs. These voices however may not be considered to have equal weight as Cabinet level spokespeople, or the power or affiliation with the President of the United States. The news releases were also generally on a more local level, and perhaps did not require a national level spokesperson to frame or publicize the issue for them.

## **Federal and nonfederal news releases--common ground**

Money and shining/exceptional examples frames were common frames in both federal and nonfederal news releases. Money in these news releases is more than just dollars. For both groups money was framed as a form of commitment to a place, project or group. It was a means to get things done; it indicated success and encouraged the inclusion of others. Support by means of funding enabled actions to be taken to buy land and dams, or provide technical support. Money gave federal organizations power to meet the goals set forth for them by the executive order, but it also gave them the financial responsibility of making cooperative conservation work. They were responsible for getting that money to potential cooperative conservation partners, or how well cooperative conservation programs succeeded.

Federal and nonfederal partners alike identified exceptional and shining examples of cooperative conservation. This gave the impression that every cooperative conservation effort was a success. With so many partnerships, projects and collaborations identified in this way by nongovernmental and federal partners, these words seemed to lose their meaning.

## **Cooperative Conservation in Newspapers**

### **Newspaper placement**

Stories about cooperative conservation appeared all over the newspapers reviewed; in the news, business, local, and sports/outdoors sections. This indicated that environmental conservation issues affect readers on the financial, cultural, community, local and national news levels. Tip O'Neal, former Speaker of the House is famously quoted as saying "All politics is local." Many news stories had a local, state or regional component or even focus, yet had national implications, being part of a larger national or multistate story or program.



The “A/News” section was not limited to national stories, but included those on cooperative conservation that were local, state and regional in scope. For example, an Oklahoma man, the first to take part in a USDA program, was held up locally as an example of the grants available in a nationwide program. There were other examples of excellent projects and “win-win” situations which were local and regional, but also considered symbolic of national possibilities.

In terms of newspaper placement as a framing technique, cooperative conservation was primarily framed as news (see table 4-3). It was also a topic that generated some opinion pieces with 29 opinion, editorial pieces and letters to the editor, which included those written by the secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. Editorials by cabinet secretaries, high level federal administration spokespeople framed cooperative conservation in positive terms. Those who criticized or questioned cooperative conservation in their pieces however, could not be considered to be of equal political stature. No editorials by federal spokespeople provided any negative cooperative conservation frames.

### **Cooperative conservation in headlines and leads**

The term “cooperative conservation” was found in a minority of the headlines and news story leads of the newspaper stories examined. For a reader to know that cooperative conservation was a part of the story, he or she would have had to read beyond the first sentence. As the lack of headlines implies, cooperative conservation was not necessarily the sole subject of a news story, but like a Swiss Army knife it was a useful multi-tool for conveying conservation messages about a natural resource from saving bison to forestland.

## **Newspaper frames and framing techniques over time**

Although news releases by federal and nongovernmental organizations provided only positive frames about cooperative conservation, they were not the only frames presented to the news reading public. Dominant frames over time in the newspapers were money, responsibility, success and conflict. These frames could have come directly from news releases.

In the newspaper articles the money frame included: funds for grants, credits, money to save lands and species, and money for success. In the news, money was more than just implied support from the Bush Administration, but also the case was made that more money was needed. More money was not a frame in federal news releases. But if existing funds could buy dams, wetlands and save oyster beds, what could more money do? In Utah, it could do more to save rangeland, and in Arkansas if \$800,000 could help find the extinct ivory-billed woodpecker, could more money do even more for the species? During listening sessions led by Cabinet secretaries named in the executive order or their designees, they were asked for more money in the form of incentives to save more species. Again, nature was given a financial value because saving it would come at a cost.

Responsibility was framed as something to be shared between the people and the federal government. The press published that federal invitation to tribes, ranchers, farmers, sportsmen and citizens to engage as active partners in conservation with the federal government. Almost any group that took part in outdoor recreation or work was called upon to enlist in the army of citizen conservationists. Within the responsibility frame was the smaller, however not often repeated frame of “the next generation,” and the assertion natural resources should be conserved for children and grandchildren.

Not just for children or outdoorsmen, some private companies were identified as being active participants in conservation efforts. Wal-Mart and Pope Resources were just two private companies that asserted their role in cooperative conservation not by simply making a supportive statement, but by committing financially to the conservation ethic. Wal-Mart's financial investment in environmental responsibility was lauded by the Secretary of the Interior as a success.

The other side of the responsibility frame was the argument that cooperative conservation was a tool for the federal government to abdicate responsibility on environmental issues, and undermine existing environmental laws. Federal spokespeople called out for citizens to engage as an "eager army," while critics said that the federal government was passing the buck on environmental issues. Whether the perception was to share or shirk responsibility, the responsibility frame clearly held within it conflict over who was responsible for environmental conservation.

Success was also a prominent theme in newspaper stories, success exemplified by results through cooperative conservation, cooperative conservation leading to saving species, or relationships leading to cooperative conservation opportunities. Cooperative efforts were the "cream of the crop" and 'standards to be emulated.' There were no news stories that solely highlighted problems with cooperative conservation, let alone abject failures. Even U.S. congressmen were quoted praising cooperative conservation efforts, despite the fact that they were not responsible for the outcomes as the cabinet members were. Success also meant achieving results, be that a land sale or funds distributed to partners. How everyone measured or identified success was not always stated in news stories. Concrete results however were stated for work by The Nature Conservancy in Montana that was cited for preserving wildlife habitat.

## **Conflict in the news**

Conflict spanned frames as well as existing as a frame unto itself. A frame advocated by federal spokespeople was that cooperative conservation was a way to avoid conflict and prevent winner take all situations--cooperative conservation as a solution. Another aspect of the conflict frame was the conflict between those who promoted cooperative conservation as a tool to improve environmental efforts, and those who saw it as way to undermine or circumvent laws established to protect the environment. In these instances, it was again Cabinet level voices framing cooperative conservation as a conflict avoidance tool and nonfederal spokespeople who attacked it as “greenwashing” or gambling with the future of federal listed species. There was also the conflict between the military and conservation efforts than might endanger troops in a combat theater. A technique used in training troops in the United States that help protect species in the south, turned out to be detrimental in a war zone. A happy medium was needed between military readiness and conservation. Conflict as a frame did not exist in press releases, other than cooperative conservation as a means to avoid conflict and yield success.

## **Framing techniques**

Cheering the cause, repetition of the party line, and criticism were the framing techniques found in examined newspaper articles. The stories revealed opposing positions, including criticism and sarcasm as techniques for framing cooperative conservation by partners and non partners alike. The one-sided view of cooperative conservation provided by federal organizations in their news releases was not the ultimate product of the newspaper articles reviewed for this research.

Much like the new releases, news stories included the praising of partners and lauding of successes. The repeated party line given by federal spokespeople and quoted in news stories

included “win-win” solutions; and ‘the federal government cannot do this alone.’ This was similar to NOAA’s fill in the blank news releases announcing who they gave money to. Over the years federal spokespeople kept to their script in framing cooperative conservation positively in the news.

Although there was less criticism than praise and cheerleading in the news stories, it was there. Funding criticism, criticism of individuals and criticism of the executive order were all present in the news. Only one editorial was from beginning to end dismissive of the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, and cooperative conservation. Other criticism was provided as quotes in news stories. Interestingly the resignation of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton was covered by multiple writers and each contained a quote that criticized cooperative conservation and the other environmental policies she was seen to represent.

### **Tracking News Releases that Became News Stories**

Although some news releases could be linked to specific newspaper stories, it was not possible without contacting newspaper editors or reporters to determine that a specific news release resulted in a specific published news story. It cannot therefore be determined with certainty that news releases issued by federal entities or their cooperative conservation partners produced particular news stories found during this research. It is possible that other local, state or regional sources provided news releases or media advisories that resulted in newspaper stories. This research excluded news releases about cooperative efforts by members of congress and non partners which could have resulted in media coverage and generated the quotes found in news stories.

Given that whether specific news releases generated specific news stories could not be unequivocally stated, some news releases on cooperative conservation did seem to translate into

newspaper stories. For example direct quotes from news releases were found in five news stories. Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton's quote: "This is a rare second chance to preserve through cooperative conservation what was once thought lost forever," (*Once thought extinct, ivory-billed woodpecker rediscovered in Arkansas*, 2005, April 28) which was printed in two news articles published April 29, 2005, and May 11, 2005 (see table 4-6). Another example is another Norton quote, this one regarding Wal-Mart's corporate stewardship that was taken from the press release, *Norton commends National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wal-Mart for landmark partnership* (2005, April 12) and used the article *Analysis: Wal-Mart and the 'union project'* (Swanson, 2005, April 13).

The White House held a cooperative conservation conference that generated media attention which could be linked back to the federal news releases about the conference (see table 4-6). Information from the DOI news release was quoted in one of the articles. The use of the news releases could have been to identify an opportunity for reporters to interview not only Cabinet members, but people from across the nation who were involved in cooperative conservation efforts, be they individual farmers or heads of environmental groups. Listening sessions held across the county also generated print media coverage and could be linked back to federal news releases (see table 4-6). Public listening sessions were also an opportunity for news media to get the perspective not only of the Cabinet member or members present, but also of the local citizens who came to participate.

Timing of the news release publication was close to the times when news stories were printed. Yet all of these do not have a direct connection between a news release published one day, and a news story the next day. It is possible that news releases were used as tools to generate ideas for future stories, rather than just short-term story opportunities. For example, the

ivory-billed woodpecker news release was dated April 28, 2005 with news stories about the woodpecker published April 29, 2005; May 11, 2005; and August 6, 2005 (see table 4-6).. Other news releases, by other organizations may have been produced between the first news release and the August 2005 news story

## **Limitations and Expanding the Research**

### **Small data sets**

The small set of nonfederal news releases limited the research. A larger set of nonfederal news releases would have provided much more robust information on how these organizations framed cooperative conservation, and if it changed over time, how. It would have also allowed the research to compare spokespeople, and provide more insight into the consistency of messages among nonfederal and federal partners.

The lack of nonfederal partner releases leads to questions such as: What did cooperative conservation mean to the partner agencies that wrote nothing about it? Why didn't they write news releases about cooperative conservation?

With the military encompassing a large amount of public lands, their lack of news releases was a loss for the research. It is possible that they were produced at the individual base level. The data searches were not conducted at the individual base level. With the U.S. military activity in Afghanistan going on since October 2001, and in Iraq since 2003, the focus of resources were likely more directed to the War on Terror than necessarily on cooperative conservation on U.S. lands.

### **Links between news releases and news stories**

Tracking the links between news releases and news stories could be better done at the time the news releases are posted and newspaper stories appear about the subject. It would also

require follow-up with newspaper writers and editors to determine if and when they used a press releases to generate a news story. This might also provide a broader data set, as all of the nation's newspapers may not be available in the Lexis-Nexis database.

### **Expanding the research**

To explore the topic in greater depth, research could include frame analysis of speeches about cooperative conservation given by federal spokespeople that also identifies the audiences. This would add the extra dimension of identifying the frames presented to target audiences by federal department spokespeople. It would also allow for the identification of any other frames that were presented to a live audience or that might be revealed during a question and answer period.

Another way to enhance the research would be to interview nonfederal partners to understand what cooperative conservation meant to them; and why they did or did not produce news releases on cooperative conservation at or near the same level as the federal organizations. This would be particularly insightful for those organizations that produced no news releases on cooperative conservation.

Another option to augment the research would be to conduct interviews with the federal people who were mid- and lower-level managers and worked on the ground with partners to determine if “cooperative conservation” resonated with them and if it was framed in the same way as those top-level voices quoted in the news releases and newspaper articles. It would also be insightful to find out what cooperative conservation messages they were conveying to their partners.

Looking at partnerships over a longer time scale would identify what federal organizations and their partners called cooperative conservation before the executive order was



signed, and what it is called now. This could aid in understanding how cooperative conservation was framed over time, and if what cooperative conservation is called matters.

### **Meaning of the research**

Based on the research, framing messages continue to be employed by political appointees to convey messages via the news media to the citizenry. Communications scholars would have to ask about the effects on those receiving these messages to determine the effects of framing. Whether or not there was an attitude or behavior change about cooperative conservation is not known from this research, but would be the next logical step to determine what message the resonated with recipients after receiving them about cooperative conservation. Was there a change from previously held attitudes or opinions about partnerships?

For public relations practitioners, this research shows the efforts for a communications campaign that could be categorized as basically successful if the objective was simply to have senior-level voices consistently convey the message of President Bush, with the exception of the Department of Defense. The cooperative conservation messages were clear, consistent, and positive. Yet to take a step back and look at cooperative conservation communications as a campaign, the lack of lower-level people such as managers, center directors, and more regional directors as voices to carry the messages could be considered failing. Those missing voices indicates that the message remained at the top and was not in essence “owned” by everyone in the organizations, thereby allowing them to be spokespeople on some level for cooperative conservation. As a campaign, it is possible that individuals at those levels were recruited to carry the message forward.

Another aspect for practitioners to consider would be measuring attitude and behavior changes due to these messages. Practitioners running the campaign should have asked if the

attitudes and behavior remain the same while being attributed to cooperative conservation, or was there an actual change that could be tied to cooperative conservation frames? As a campaign were there actual objectives, and was there any measurement at the end of the campaign to determine success? From the perspective of a public relations practitioner, there are a number of unanswered questions.

### **Conclusions**

Cooperative conservation was consistently framed positively over time in news releases among federal organizations named in E.O. 13352. Among federal organizations, the frames were success, money for cooperative conservation, cooperative conservation as a tool, and responsibility. The limited number of news releases by the few nonfederal partners in the research provided some insight into how they framed cooperative conservation, but also left unanswered questions. Nonfederal partners employed the cooperative conservation frames of natural resources, money, and exceptional examples. Common ground shared by federal news releases and nonfederal news releases were the frames of money and shining examples.

News stories over time also revealed consistency in cooperative conservation frames, with the overall frames being money, responsibility, success, and conflict. Placement in newspapers framed cooperative conservation as “news” and often included the local aspect of national or regional stories. A minority of links between news releases and news stories were found in the research. A direct cause and effect between news releases and news stories could not be confirmed.

APPENDIX A  
NEWSPAPER ITEM CODING SHEET

1. ITEM ID# \_\_\_\_\_

2. Newspaper Name \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 4. Approximate item length \_\_\_\_\_ (number of words)  
(Month /Day/Year)

5. Writers Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Author of piece)

6. Origin of item (Circle answer)

**Local            Guest/Freelance            Wire Service/Syndicate\*            Combination            Editorial**  
**Board**

6a. If wire, syndicate or combination, please indicate service by name:

7. Part of a Series?    Yes   No   (Circle Answer)

7a. Title of Series: \_\_\_\_\_ (write the name of the series)

7b. What part of the series is this? \_\_\_\_\_ (Identify 1, 2, 3, etc.)

7c. Series editor name (if given) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Section: \_\_\_\_\_ (Identify if section A, B, C, etc.)

9 Page number: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Description of section: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e., News, Local, Sports, Metro, Living, etc)

11. Geographic Level of Item (Please circle):

Local                  County                  State                  Regional                  National  
 (City/Town)    (County)                  (State)                  (multi-state/Watershed/landscape)    (USA)

International (crosses national boundaries with Canada and/or Mexico)

12. Geographic Focus (circle)

In state                  Out of state (s): \_\_\_\_\_(Identify the State or states)

13. Item Type

News                  Feature                  Letter to Editor                  Editorial/Opinion                  Other:\_\_\_\_\_

14. If there is a pull quote, does it include the term “cooperative conservation” \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

15. Does the headline include the term “cooperative conservation”? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

16. Does Lead include the term “cooperative conservation”? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

17. Main Topic of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Secondary Topic of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Sources used for direct quotations (list all and professional association, and paragraph)

Name / Title/Affiliation	Frames/Techniques	Para #


20. Framing and framing techniques (also mark directly on the item being coded)

APPENDIX B  
NEWSPAPER ITEM CODING GUIDELINES

1. Item Number—Mark the four character alphanumeric code assigned to the article being coded.
2. Newspaper name—List the name of the newspaper in which the story was published, even if it originated in another newspaper or a wire service.
3. Date—Fill in the Month/Day/Year
4. Approximate Length of Item—Write the approximate number of words. If the word count is provided, list that. If the word count is not provided, count the number of words in the first five lines; divide by five. Multiply that number by the number of lines in the story to calculate an approximate length of the item in words.
5. Writers Name—Write the reporter(s) names as they are listed in the byline.
6. Origin of item—Identify if the item originated in the newspaper it was printed in, a wire service or another newspaper, or a syndicate.
  - 6a. If wire, syndicate, or combination—Write the name of the wire service, syndicate or other source(s) the item comes from if it is not from the newspaper it is printed in.
7. Part of a Series—Identify if this item is part of a series of a series by circling “yes” or “no.”
  - 7a. Series Title—List the name/title of the series
  - 7b. What part of the series is this? List \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. 1/ 3 to indicate 1 of 3.)
  - 7c. Series editor name—Provide the name of the series editor if it is provided.
8. Section—Identify the section of the newspaper where the article appears, such as Section A, B, C, etc., or a named section such as News, Local, Sports, Metro, Living, etc.
9. Page Number—Indicate the page number or numbers on which the item is found.

10. Description of Section—This may be the same as the section (see #9). News, Local, Sports, Metro, Living, etc. If there is uncertainty, the first section is typically national and international news, with the second section being local news. State and local news are also found in the “Metro” section of the newspaper. Items may also be found in Health, Living, Science, Environment, Sports, Business, or Editorial sections of the newspaper.

11. Geographic Level of Item—Determining the geographic level may be possible from the dateline, if available, and the sources in the item. If the story's dateline is Washington D.C., New York, and the story is not from a Washington D.C., or New York newspaper, it is likely to be a national or international story. You may need to use the story's context to determine if the scope is international, national, regional, state or local. If the focus of the item is exclusively or primarily local, then it is a local story; if the focus of the item is exclusively or primarily international, then the scope is international. Consider who is quoted, including their title and organization affiliation, which will also provide an indication of the geographic level of the item. Also consider who is impacted, if it is the local area, the state, multiple states in a watershed, etc., This will help to narrow down if level of the story. For example, cooperative conservation is a national initiative, but the focus in the item may be on cooperative conservation partnerships on the watershed level, which spans multiple states, making it a regional story focus.

12. Geographic Focus—It is an in-state focus if the issue and what is discussed is occurring primarily in the home state of the newspaper. The issues could be occurring in another state, but if the story focuses on the in-state story or aspects, then it would be considered an in-state story. If the item has been coded Local in Number 12, then it is likely an in-state issue. If you have coded it as a “Regional,” “National,” or “International,” it is likely to be an out-of-state story if

the issue or item being discussed is taking place out of the home state of the newspaper. Review the story context for certainty.

13. Item Type—If the item is a “news” item it will have a time element in the lead. If you are uncertain about the “news” category, determine if the story could be run a few days before or weeks later with the exact same wording. If it could not, then it is likely a news story. Feature stories are not as focused on time. Opinion pieces generally take a stand on an issue, including argument for or against an issue. Opinion pieces take the form of “Editorials,” and “Letters to the Editor.”

14. Pull Quote—If there is a pull quote, indicate “Yes” or “No” if it includes the term “cooperative conservation.”

15. Headline of Item—Does the headline the term “cooperative conservation”? Mark “Yes” or “No.”

16. Lead of Item— Does the lead include “cooperative conservation?” Mark “Yes” or “No.”

17. Main Topic of Item—Identify the main topic of the story. This is the primary or main issue or event that is the focus of the story. If it is difficult to determine the main topic, for each potential main topic, count the number of paragraphs that deal with that topic that you have identified. The topic with the most paragraphs will be the main topic.

18. Secondary Topic of Item—After identifying the main topic of the article, any other topics that are important to the story but cannot be considered the main topic should be noted here.

19. Sources used for direct quotations—List the names, titles, affiliation and paragraph number of all sources who are directly quoted in the article. If a description is provided such as, volunteer, researcher, fund raiser, etc.—include this information as well. Include all frames associated with quote.



20. Framing and framing techniques--Read the item carefully multiple times, paragraph by paragraph. As you read, closely examine the text to note the presence and absence of key words, phrases, loaded terms, sources of information used and excluded from the story. This includes the headline, pull quote, kicker, caption(s), as well as the full text of the article to determine how the story is framed. How is cooperative conservation framed? Who is identified as having a role? Who are the sources and are they credible? What issues are raised and how are they presented? Elements to consider are the theme, tone, symbols, figurative language, visual images, metaphors, catchphrases, or symbolic devices, and analogies. This also includes the symbols, visual images, and themes that are not included. Review the direct quotations included in the article and indicate those that affect the item's framing or framing techniques. Indicate quotations that affect the item's frames and/or framings by highlighting them with a highlighter marker pen. Indicate the frames the quotation reinforces or advances. Identify the framing techniques used to advance a particular frame in the article. Techniques can include language, such as the use of key words, leads, headlines, quotation marks, catch phrases, and figures of speech to present or maintain particular themes by use of sentences or phrases, and repetition of themes. Other framing techniques include delegitimization of an issue or speaker by using quotation marks for non-speech; a focus on style instead of substance; underestimates of results or participant's focus on events instead of issues by ignoring goals and missions, and instead only describing surface details and describing actions. Further techniques to look for also include: choosing to cover one side or both sides of an issue, a writer putting forth his or her own interpretation, simplifying events or stories; by simply allocating greater coverage to one issue over another, the media act as gatekeepers, advocates, and interpreters of political themes and

information. Highlight examples of the text from the item that illustrates any of the framing techniques that are used in the story. Also mark directly on the item.

APPENDIX C  
PRESS RELEASE ITEM CODING SHEET

1. ITEM ID# \_\_\_\_\_

2. Organization Listed on Release: \_\_\_\_\_

---

3. Release Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Month /Day/Year)

4. Contacts Listed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Geographic Level of Item (Please circle):

Local (City/Town)	County (County)	State (State)	Regional (multi-state/Watershed/Landscape)	National (USA)
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International (crosses national boundaries with Canada and/or Mexico)

6.. Does Headline mention cooperative conservation: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

7. Does Lead of Item mention cooperative conservation: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

8. Main Topic of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Secondary Topic of Item:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Sources used for direct quotations (list all and professional association, paragraph, and frames)

<b>Name/Title/ Affiliation</b>	<b>Frames/Techniques</b>	<b>Para #</b>


11. Framing and framing techniques (also mark directly on the item being coded)

APPENDIX D  
PRESS RELEASE ITEM CODING GUIDELINES

1. Item Number—Mark the four character alphanumeric code assigned to the article being coded.
2. Organization(s) listed on news release—List the name(s) of the organization(s) that produced the news release.
3. Date—Fill in the Month/Day/Year
4. Contacts Listed—Write the name of the contact(s) names as they are listed on the news release.
5. Geographic Level of Item—The geographic level may be determined from the lead. You may need to use the news releases context to determine if the scope is international, national, regional, state or local. If the focus of the item is exclusively or primarily local, then it is a local news release; if the focus of the item is exclusively or primarily international, then the scope is international. Consider who is quoted, including their title and organization affiliation which will also provide an indication of the geographic level of the item. Also considering who is impacted, if it is the local area, the state, multiple states in a watershed, etc., will help narrow down the level of the story. For example, cooperative conservation is a national initiative, but the focus in the item may be on cooperative conservation partnerships on the watershed level, which spans multiple states making it a regional story focus.
6. Headline of Item— Identify if the headline mentions cooperative conservation by marking “Yes” or “No.”
7. Lead of Item—Identify if the lead mentions cooperative conservation by marking “Yes” or “No.”

8. Main Topic of Item—Identify the main topic of the story. This is the primary or main issue or event that is the focus of the story. If it is difficult to determine the main topic, for each potential main topic count the number of paragraphs that deal with that topic that you have identified. The topic with the most paragraphs will be the main topic.
9. Secondary Topic of Item—After identifying the main topic of the article, any other topics that are important to the story but cannot be considered the main topic should be noted here.
10. Sources used for direct quotations--List the names, titles, affiliation and paragraph number of all sources who are directly quoted in the article. If a description is provided such as volunteer, researcher, fund raiser, etc., include this information as well. Include all frames associated with quote.
11. Framing and framing techniques—Read the item carefully multiple times, paragraph by paragraph. As you read, closely examine the text to note the presence and absence of key words, phrases, loaded terms, sources of information used and excluded from the story. This includes the headline, pull quote, kicker, caption(s), as well as the full text of the article to determine how the story is framed. How is cooperative conservation framed? Who is identified as having a role? Who are the sources and are they credible? What issues are raised and how are they presented? Elements to consider are the theme, tone, symbols, figurative language, visual images, metaphors, catchphrases, or symbolic devices, and analogies. This also includes the symbols, visual images, and themes that are not included. Review the direct quotations included in the article and indicate those that affect the item's framing or framing techniques. Indicate quotations that affect the item's frames and/or framings by highlighting them with a highlighter marker pen. Indicate the frames the quotation reinforces or advances. Identify the framing techniques used to advance a particular frame in the article. Techniques can include language,

such as the use of key words, leads, headlines, quotation marks, catch phrases, and figures of speech to present or maintain particular themes by use of sentences or phrases, or repetition of themes. Other framing techniques include delegitimization of an issue or speaker by using quotation marks for non-speech; a focus on style instead of substance; underestimates of results or participants; focus on events instead of issues by ignoring goals and missions, and instead only describing surface details and describing actions. Further techniques to look for also include choosing to cover one side or both sides of an issue, a writer putting forth his or her own interpretation, simplifying events or stories, or by simply allocating greater coverage to one issue over another, the media act as gatekeepers, advocates, and interpreters of political themes and information. Highlight examples of the text from the item that illustrates any of the framing techniques that are used in the news release. Also mark directly on the item.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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